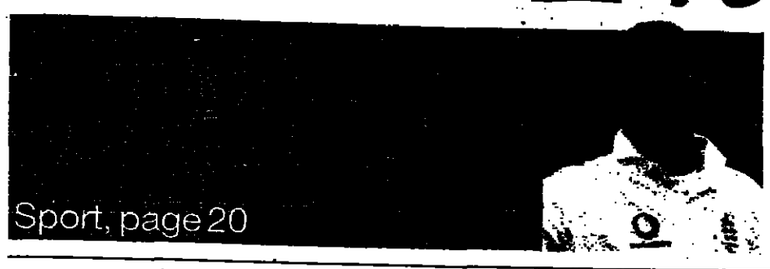
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Monday
December 28 1998
Britain's newspaper for Europe

The Guardian EUROPE



Sport, page 20



Women, G2 pages 6-7

Media, G2 pages 9-13

Labour's rethink on spin

Ministers vow to go back to basics

David Hencke and Nicholas Watt

THE Government is to make a New Year resolution to tip the balance away from style and spin after the biggest crisis since its election victory 18 months ago, senior ministers disclosed last night.

They expect the Prime Minister to use Peter Mandelson's dramatic departure from the Cabinet last week to reassert Labour's basic policies — jobs, the NHS, education and new welfare policies to help Labour's traditional supporters, the poor.

Ministers emphasised that the New Labour project was not dead but that the poor presentation of it — the "mistake over Cool Britannia" and the attempt to associate Labour with a wealthy, glitzy, design-conscious elite — was badly flawed.

Instead, ministers want a higher profile for the substance of New Labour. This would include fresh emphasis on the New Deal initiative to get people off the dole and into jobs; on benefit support and new minimum wages for poor working families; a promotion of the large sums being poured into the NHS and schools; and modernising the decrepit transport system.

Support for a new direction is not confined to the traditional Brownites. It is understood that strong views have been expressed across the cabinet spectrum from traditionalists such as John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Margaret Beckett, leader of the House, to modernisers such as Stephen Byers, the new Trade Secretary, and Alan Milburn, the new Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

The strong views from ministers came as Tony Blair yesterday sent a blunt message to his opponents within Labour that they should not try to use Mr Mandelson's resignation to undermine the modernisation of the party.



'The project goes on. We got elected as New Labour, we'll govern as New Labour'

Tony Blair

In his first interview since Mr Mandelson's departure, the Prime Minister insisted that he would not be knocked off course by the loss of his close friend.

"There will be a certain number of people who will be foolish enough to think that Peter's going means that somehow there's some blow to the project of New Labour," Mr Blair said on Radio 4. "That goes on. We got elected as New Labour, we'll govern as New Labour."

Mr Blair's remarks were seen as a rebuke to unnamed ministers who suggested over the weekend that the loss of Mr Mandelson, one of the chief architects of New Labour, should lead to a reassessment of the whole project. There was even a suggestion that Labour should begin to sever its links with the Liberal Democrats.

Mark Seddon, the editor of Tribune and a member of Labour's national executive committee, backed the calls, saying that Mr Blair should place the emphasis "more on Labour, less on the new".

He added: "Tony Blair was saying this morning, 'We're going to govern as New Labour . . .' If it is about cosying up to big business and towards some sort of Gladstonian Liberalism of the last century as Roy Jenkins would like us to follow, I don't think Labour party supporters and people want that."

The Prime Minister dismissed such talk as he pledged to press on with his modernisation programme, with or without Mr Mandelson. "It's bigger than any individual," he said. "What is important now is that we keep a sense of perspective about it. The Government goes on, we move on."

Mr Blair said that Mr Mandelson had made a mistake in failing to declare the £373,000 loan from Geoffrey Robinson which allowed him to buy a house worth 10 times his salary in Notting Hill. Mr Robinson resigned last week as Paymaster General after the Guardian disclosed details of the loan.

"He made a mistake, he did something wrong, and he paid a heavy penalty for it," Mr Blair said of Mr Mandelson.

However, Conservatives demanded a full inquiry into Mr Robinson's financial links with Labour. Peter Lilley, the deputy Tory leader, wrote to Sir Richard Wilson, the Cabinet Secretary, asking him to investigate how many ministers had been offered loans by the millionaire businessman.

Mr Mandelson is considering a number of career options. He may take up a role in the cross-party group that will campaign for Britain to join the euro. He is also considering making a television film with Oxfam in East Africa. He will not, as has been suggested, stand for mayor of London, and will not work as a spin doctor in next year's election campaigns for the new devolved bodies and the European Parliament.

The fall of Mandelson, page 2; Letters, page 9; Cover Story, G2; Roy Greenslade, G2, page 13



Will it all be a blur? This Oxford Street shopper has got the message, but M&S will be wondering if its TV adverts have registered PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Sales gloom as M&S turns to TV

Store chain strives to halt decline as sales get off to a sluggish start

Chris Barrie

MARKS & Spencer has begun advertising on national television for the first time in memory in an attempt to halt a drastic decline in the chain's sales.

The move comes as the gloom in the retail trade intensified yesterday amid indications that the end-of-year sales had got off to a slow start.

Retailers hope the New Year sales will make up for poor pre-Christmas trading, which saw many shops forced to discount products in what has traditionally been the trade's most important period.

M&S's three-day advertising campaign, which began on Christmas Day, was designed to lure consumers back into its stores as the company grapples with sliding sales and a fall in confidence.

Only a week before Christmas, one of the City's leading retail analysts estimated that M&S sales were between 6 and 10 per cent below last year's levels.

The company has already acknowledged the difficulties and two months ago reported its first fall in profits in nearly 10 years.

The troubles followed a boardroom bust-up over which director would succeed Sir Richard Greenbury as chief executive. That row, combined with the fall in sales, has placed the chain under the spotlight and rocked investors' confidence in what was regarded as a reliable and steady group.

Running at peak times on the ITV network over the Christmas period, the 30-second commercial was aimed at highlighting the range of merchandise on offer at reduced prices in the post-Christmas sales.

The TV campaign is designed to complement advertising in the press and follows selective advertising on TV in the regions to promote particular products. The company confirmed it had not used national advertising for many years but declined to quantify the cost.

M&S declined to comment last night on how sales had fared in the run-up to Christmas. But a spokeswoman promised a trading statement on Christmas trading, including post-Christmas sales campaigns, would be made within three weeks.

Some 100 M&S stores were due to open yesterday, about one-third of the total.

Shoppers elsewhere reported a lack of bargains and some retailers were forecasting this year's sales would not match last year's, due to the restrictions of Sunday opening hours. The British Retail Consortium reported that confidence remained low, adding that overstocking last year had meant more bargains for consumers.

Spokeswoman Ann Grain said: "Consumers are much more cautious. There may have been three interest cuts but there were six rises before that and people have this fear of depression around the corner. There are redundancies around and people are thinking, 'I could be next'."

However, Gateshead's Metro Centre had more than 50,000 shoppers pass through its 350 shops by lunchtime.

Meanwhile, roads around the Lakeside Centre at Thurrock in Essex and at Meadowhall, Sheffield, were heavily congested as shoppers went bargain-hunting.

Birth of the euro

With only five days to the birth of the euro, the Guardian this week examines how the historic event will transform Europe's political and economic landscape.

Page 12

Football hooligans face tougher curbs

Will Woodward

NEW curbs on football hooliganism, including a ban on racist chanting, are likely to become law within months through a private member's bill to be unveiled today.

Simon Burns, Conservative MP for Chelmsford West, has decided to take forward Home Office proposals that will make it easier to ban thugs from grounds.

He came sixth in the ballot of MPs to bring forward a private member's bill and, with government support, it has a good chance of becoming law. His Football Spectators Offences Bill would:

- Make it an offence for an individual to make racist or indecent chants at football grounds. Current legislation allows conviction only if two or more fans are chanting.
- Extend ticket touting legislation to include curbs on touts selling tickets, in England and Wales, for matches abroad or in other parts of the UK.
- Lower the threshold for imposing restriction orders banning fans from grounds to "reasonable grounds", rather than the courts having to be satisfied that to ban the fan would actually prevent an offence being committed.
- Ban fans from grounds for up to 10 years if they have been convicted of an offence with a jail term (up from five years) and for six years if they have been convicted without a jail term (up from two years).
- Widen the definition of a "football-related offence" to include activities 24 hours either side of a match inside England and Wales, and 72 hours outside.
- Force courts to consider imposing a restriction order on any supporter convicted of a football-related offence, and to state their reasons if they decide not to.
- Require supporters under restriction orders to report to a specified police station.

Mr Burns said last night: "Despite the best endeavours of both the last government and the current one, the disgraceful behaviour by a small element of yobs and thugs at the World Cup in France last summer shows that more needs to be done to tighten up the law to allow the police and the courts to take greater action against those hooligans who besmirch football, dishonour our national reputation abroad and spoil it for decent law-abiding football fans."

Home Office minister Kate Hoey said last night: "I am pleased that an MP in the ballot has decided to take through this very important and very necessary legislation."

She added: "It is in the interests of all supporters to see the lives of a small, ruthless minority made more difficult."

Ms Hoey may suggest amendments to beef up the bill when a consultation period on other measures ends on February 26. They include confiscation of passports of known troublemakers five days before a match.

Other proposals in the consultation, published last month, include allowing courts to impose restriction orders even if individual fans have not been convicted, and to enable chief constables to impose alcohol sale bans in towns for certain matches.

Ms Hoey said: "It is a bit funny if we are asking other countries to do this and we are not prepared to have the legislation available ourselves."

The Government is concerned to get legislation on the statute book in time for Euro 2000 in Belgium and the Netherlands, and to help England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup.

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Andorra FF 10	Finland FM 15	Lebanon LL 3000	Russia US$ 2.75
Austria AS 30	France FF 12	Luxembourg LF 65	Saudi Arabia R 10
Bahrain BD 0.85	Germany DM 3.80	Madeira E 310	Slovakia SK 75
Belgium BF 70	Greece D 500	Malta ML 0.65	Slovenia SLT 290
Bulgaria LV 1,500	Hong Kong HK$ 25	Morocco D 25	Spain P 275
Canada C$ 3.95	Hungary F 300	Netherlands G 4.25	Sweden SK 17
Croatia KN 15.00	Iceland IK 185	Norway NK 18	Switzerland SF 3.50
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Czech Rep. KC 35	Italy L 3,500	Pakistan R 80	Turkey TL 250,000
Denmark DK 17	Jordan JD 1.25	Poland Z 6.90	Ukraine US$ 3.50
Dubai D 8.50	Kenya KSH 150	Portugal E 280	USA US$ 3.00

UK news

The gales that swept Britain and Ireland over Christmas claimed at least four lives and left thousands without electricity.

Page 5

International

The smallest of the Texas octuplets, weighing only 10.3 ounces has died of heart failure a week after being born.

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Our e-mail address for editorial comments is geurope@guardian.co.uk

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The fall of Mandelson



Mr Mandelson's aide confirmed that a legacy would help him to settle his outstanding debts, but refused to explain where the money had come from

New row over five private jet trips



Lingerie millionaire Linda Wachner, who describes Peter Mandelson as a friend

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT F BUKATY

FREE FLIGHTS: 'Lifts' in US lingerie tycoon's plane were not declared, writes **David Hencke**

PETER Mandelson is facing fresh controversy after the disclosure yesterday that he took five free flights in a private jet owned by the New York lingerie millionaire, Linda Wachner, whose company markets Calvin Klein underwear and Olga and Warner brds.

Ms Wachner, who has given $65,000 (£38,000) in the past year to the Democrats and Republicans and has previously backed Bob Dole for president and the controversial ex-Speaker, Newt Gingrich, recently gave the former trade secretary a "lift" in her £15 million Gulfstream jet across the Atlantic, from Colorado to Heathrow. Mr Mandelson had been a guest at her mountain home in Aspen.

She described Mr Mandelson as a friend who has flown with her at least five times while she was travelling between Britain, the United States, Ireland, France and the Caribbean, visiting her extensive business empire.

The Guardian understands that as well as the American flight, Mr Mandelson's trips on her jet this year include one to Dublin, although his office will not confirm any details.

A spokesman said yesterday: "There has been at least one trip and possibly more. Peter has been on holiday with Linda Wachner in America. They are good friends, who met many years ago in America. She was flying back to Europe at her own expense — not her company's — and offered Peter a lift."

None of the trips has been declared as a gift in the Register of Members' Interests. Mr Mandelson's office says the flights should not be declared as they have nothing to do with his role as an MP or minister.

But Conservatives are planning to draft a complaint to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Elizabeth Filkin.

The shadow trade and industry secretary, John Redwood, yesterday called for a full statement by Mr Mandelson.

He said: "Are the people of Hartlepool going to want to keep Peter Mandelson as their Member of Parliament? His lifestyle seems to be so divorced from theirs, he has done nothing to stop factory closures and job losses in the North-east.

"And now there is a whole series of questions he must answer in front of the Parliamentary Commissioner on Standards.

"Nothing less than a full statement of all the free flights, gifts, loans and other elements of his lifestyle will now do."

Ms Wachner, aged 52, is chief executive and chairman of the Warnaco Group. She is known as a go-getting businesswoman who spent more than 1,000 hours in the air this year building up her empire. She has an annual salary of $11.48 million.

She is a New York socialite who regularly gives money to campaigns by local senators.

Her husband died two years ago, and she spends all her time developing her business.

Among her biggest donations this year were $20,000 to the Democratic National Committee for the congressional elections, and $45,000 to the Republican National State Elections Committee.

She has also made numerous donations to Republican and Democrat candidates, of between $500 and $5,000.

Mr Mandelson's friend also has a reputation for being a "control freak". A recent article in the New York Post said her "single-minded drive and corporate-suite daring have earned her such epithets as tenacious, imperious, dictatorial and egotistical".

"She's a notorious control freak and personally reviews every product line made by her companies," the paper said.

Ms Wachner's empire also exports Speedo swimwear and such Ralph Lauren designer products as Chaps to Britain.

Mortgage revelation intensifies scrutiny

THE LOAN: Building society money was secured before old flat paid off. **Nick Hopkins** reports

PETER Mandelson's murky financial arrangements were under fresh scrutiny yesterday when it emerged that he had secured a mortgage for his home in Notting Hill, west London, while still paying off a substantial loan for his old flat.

According to the Sunday Mirror, Mr Mandelson did not sell his property in Clerkenwell, north London, until February 1997 — three months after he bought the Georgian house in Northumberland Place.

During that period he was responsible for two mortgages at a time when he was earning less than £40,000 a year as MP for Hartlepool.

The revelation raises questions over whether Mr Mandelson declared the details of his first mortgage to the Britannia building society when he applied for money to buy the new house.

Yesterday he evaded the issue, saying he had written to the Britannia to clarify what he wrote on his application forms two years ago.

"Peter cannot recall the exact details," said his aide. "He doesn't want to talk about this subject at the moment. He doesn't see there is any point in getting into discussions about the matter until the building society has written back to him."

Mr Mandelson's vagueness increased suspicion at Westminster that he was far from frank with the company when he bought the house in November 1996.

Last week he was derided when he said he could not remember whether he told it that Geoffrey Robinson, the former paymaster general, had lent him £373,000 to buy the house, which is in one of London's most exclusive neighbourhoods.

Asked before his resignation whether he had filled in the forms accurately, Mr Mandelson replied: "I have no idea, quite honestly."

If Mr Mandelson has misled the Britannia on either issue, he could be in deep trouble. Borrowers are legally obliged to declare all loans to lenders so that their credit worthiness can be assessed.

The Britannia is likely to launch its own inquiry after the Christmas break and could call in the police if it feels Mr Mandelson's mortgage was gained fraudulently.

An investigation could lead to a criminal charge of obtaining money by deception.

The mystery of how Mr Mandelson expects to pay back Mr Robinson deepened yesterday, when friends of the former trade secretary said he would soon receive a £350,000 family legacy.

Robert Harris, the millionaire author, said the money had come from the estate of Mr Mandelson's father George, and that the repayment did not depend on the sale of the £500,000 family home in Hampstead, north London.

But according to the Family Records Centre, George Mandelson's estate was worth £51,711.58 when he died 10 years ago. He bequeathed everything to his wife Mary.

There is money on the other side of the family, but Mr Mandelson is unlikely to have benefited.

The widow of his grandfather, Lord Morrison, left £402,079 when she died in 1997. But she did not get on well with Mr Mandelson's mother, who is the daughter of Lord Morrison's first wife.

Mr Mandelson's aide confirmed that a legacy would help him to settle his debts, but refused to explain where the money had come from or why it had not been used to buy the house.

"Peter is not prepared to discuss his private business. It is a matter for him and him alone where this money has come from. Money will be made available to him.

"I can confirm that Mr Harris is entirely correct in what he says, but I am not going to elaborate."

Hostile biography passes into new hands



Routledge: Mirror moved in as Sunday Times hesitated

THE BOOK: Mirror to carry serialisation as rival dithers, reports **Will Woodward**

THE serialisation of a hostile biography of Peter Mandelson was yesterday transferred from the Sunday Times to the Mirror, the paper the author, Paul Routledge, works for.

Mr Routledge's book about the former Trade and Industry Secretary was due to be featured in the Sunday Times early next year. The revelation that Geoffrey Robinson had loaned Mr Mandelson £373,000 for his west London home featured in chapter one.

But a Guardian investigation independently and separately discovered the story, which was published on December 22, sparking panic at News International. Mr Mandelson resigned the next day.

Piers Morgan, editor of The Mirror, said last night: "The Mirror has acquired exclusive rights to the book and will be serialising it shortly.

"This is the political book of the year. It precipitated the downfall of Peter Mandelson and there are a number of major new revelations which will be of considerable interest in the corridors of power."

Mirror sources were refusing to reveal even a "ballpark" figure for the cost of the serialisation last night.

But Mr Routledge is thought to be taking rather less from The Mirror deal than the £80,000 the Sunday Times is believed to have offered him.

The Sunday Times had certainly tried to renegotiate the deal. The paper wanted Mr Routledge, chief political commentator of The Mirror, to both slash his price and bring the serialisation forward.

The Sunday Business newspaper claimed yesterday that the Sunday Times had abandoned the serialisation. While the paper dithered, according to sources, The Mirror offered their man a deal to do the book with his own paper.

Mr Routledge's last book, a semi-authorised biography of the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, triggered one of the earliest rows of the Blair government by revealing the depth of bitterness in the Brown camp about the 1994 Labour leadership contest.

That serialisation was also rushed forward after a copy of his book was found on sale early at an airport and passed to the Guardian.

Mr Routledge joined The Mirror after being first offered and then "un-offered" the political editorship of The Express, amid dark murmurings of complaints by Blairite figures high up in the Government to the Express's owner, Lord Hollick, and its editor, Rosie Boycott.

He joined The Mirror where he has revelled in his "Mr Angry" persona, penning sharp and "off-message" pieces from an essentially Old Labour perspective.

His new book was feared by Mr Mandelson and his friends, not least because Mr Routledge is an admirer of Mr Brown and a close friend of the Chancellor's spin doctor, Charlie Whelan.

While he has been continuing to write for the Mirror, Mr Routledge has, until now, been constrained in what he can say by the terms of his Sunday Times deal.

Knives out for Chancellor's confidant

Nicholas Watt
Political Correspondent

THE knives are out for Charlie Whelan, Gordon Brown's aide, who may become a third Labour casualty following Peter Mandelson's resignation.

Downing Street has had Mr Whelan in its sights for at least a year and some Blairites are predicting he could be gone within weeks — despite his vehement denials that he had anything to do with leaking the story. The Blairites believe the affair has damaged Mr Whelan, not least because he is thought to have passed on details of the story to the Mirror after the Guardian contacted Mr Robinson with the allegations, which the newspaper had obtained from an independent source.

The Chancellor is understood to be maintaining his fight to keep Mr Whelan by his side. The loss of the aide would represent a weakening of Mr Brown's power base within the Government because he is the only Labour spin doctor allowed to operate outside the control of the Downing Street media machine.

Mr Whelan, a hugely popular figure among Westminster journalists, won prominence in the autumn of 1997 when the Government decided to rule out membership of the euro during the lifetime of this Parliament.

On the night the story broke in the Times, Mr Whelan was spotted outside the Red Lion pub in Whitehall confirming the story to other newspapers on his mobile telephone in typically rumbustious style.

Relations between Mr Whelan and Downing Street deteriorated further when he emerged as the chief source for Paul Routledge's biography of the Chancellor.

Mr Whelan is a rare example in New Labour of an old style, beer-drinking operator. A former Communist, he has carefully mastered a wide-boy cockney accent which is a far cry from his public school education.



Charlie Whelan: Blairites are predicting his downfall

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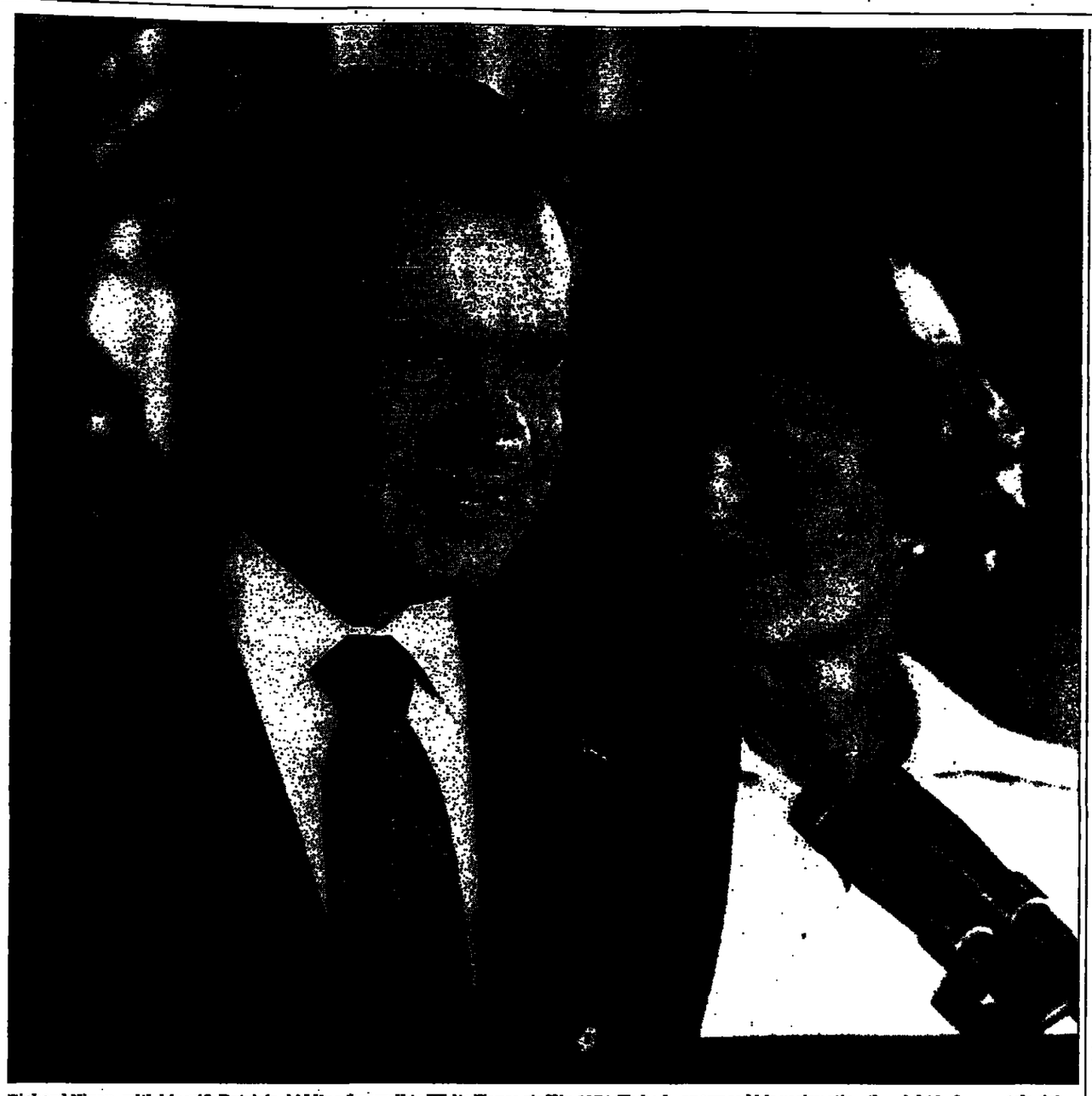
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Nixon on women: 'A pain in the neck, very difficult to handle'

Nixon on blacks: 'You put incompetents in and get along with them because the symbolism is vitally important'

Nixon on Mexicans: 'That's the problem, finding a Mexican that's honest'

Nixon on Italians: 'Italians have somewhat the same problem'



Richard Nixon, with his wife Patricia, bidding farewell to White House staff in 1974. He had announced his resignation the night before on television

From beyond the grave, Tricky Dick tells the US: No sucking around, screw you all

Richard Nixon may be dead and gone but the testimony he left is alive in a federal court. **Michael Ellison** on a legal wrangle

RICHARD NIXON and Bill Clinton have much in common: the presidency, impeachment, and a propensity for bombing far-away nations. But for all his vices, Nixon found that his prejudices served him well when it came to avoiding The Great Clinton Failing.

Monica Lewinsky might only have been a White House intern but she would not have cut much ice with the disgraced Republican president. Women and government, Nixon believed, should be kept at a distance from one another. Females were "a pain in the neck" and not "really worth the effort."

Harsh words. Yet Nixon's view of women was relatively moderate compared with the comments he reserved for his own staff, military leaders and cabinet colleagues, not to mention black people and Mexicans: "With blacks you look the other way. The same with Mexicans, you've got to look the other way. You've got to find one who's honest."

Nixon's controversial sayings have emerged in previously unheard tapes which were seized by Congress when Nixon resigned in August 1974 and which have been played before a federal court. His estate wants the court to rule that it is entitled to about $213 million (£145 million) in compensation and 24 years' interest for 42 million pages of documents, 3,700 hours of recordings, and thousands of photographs.

The US government claims that the late president never intended to cash in on his legacy. Justice Department lawyers argue that his inflammatory remarks are such that Nixon would never have wanted them to be made public — and have made the remarks public to prove the point.

Nixon and H R Haldeman, White House chief of staff, discussed the need for better personnel in top jobs at a meeting on March 8, 1971. A summary written by aide Fred Malek was an early stab at what was later to be dubbed affirmative action. "Blacks have the highest priority, followed by Mexican-Americans, and then ethnics," he wrote. "Competent women who can compete with men should be placed in selected positions, especially in those with symbolic value."

Nixon's audio version tells a rather less politically correct story. "With blacks, you can usually settle for an incompetent because there are just not enough competent ones, and so you put incompetents in and get along with them because the symbolism is vitally important. You have to show you care."

His expectations of Mexicans were not high, either. "That's the problem, finding a Mexican that is honest. And Italians have somewhat the same problem."

But the president was at least gracious enough to share his invective, extending it to members of his inner circle. A month after dealing with the place of minorities in government, he delivered a nationwide television address in which he said that he was stepping up troop withdrawals from Vietnam and that he intended to finish American involvement in the war.

Nixon considered this one of his finest speeches and was put out when few of his advisers called up to congratulate him. "Screw the cabinet and the rest," he told national security adviser Henry Kissinger, who had done his duty and offered up praise. "No more sucking around, from now on they come to me. I'm sick of the whole bunch. The others are a bunch of goddammed cowards.

"The staff, except for Haldeman and [John] Ehrlichman, screw them. The Cabinet, except for [Treasury Secretary John B] Connally, the hell with them."

It was President Clinton's hero, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, for whom Nixon's ultimate condemnation was reserved, that of having had the South Vietnam president Ngo Dinh Diem "murdered."

When the evangelist Billy Graham called to congratulate Nixon for his intention of winding down the war, he replied: "He [Kennedy] started the damn thing. He killed Diem and sent the first 16,000 combat people there himself."

And as for his generals, they were "a bunch of greedy bastards".

At least he did not question their sanity, a charge levelled at his political opponents. When Hale Boggs, Democratic leader of the House of Representatives, demanded the resignation of J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, for allegedly tapping the phones of Congress members and spying on students, Nixon said he was "off his rocker".

The president demanded of House Republican leader, and later president, Gerald Ford: "What's the matter with your opposite number? He's on the sauce, isn't that it? I don't think I can tell him anything in confidence. Frankly, everything I say is classified. You cannot have a nut."

Or, it would seem, a woman or a black or a Mexican or an Italian.



The White House tape recorder into which Richard Nixon spoke . . . controversy continues

RAF told to return Iraqi fire

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

BRITISH planes will return fire if attacked by Iraqi anti-aircraft guns over the "no-fly zones" in the north and south of the country, the Ministry of Defence warned yesterday in the wake of Baghdad's claims that it had fired on allied warplanes attacking one of its air defence units.

Signs that the latest crisis in the Gulf is far from over came with a high-level threat from Baghdad at the weekend that United States and British planes would be confronted. "We say it clearly, any violations of our airspace cannot but be confronted by Iraqi fire," the Iraqi vice-president, Taha Yassin Ramadan, told Qatar's al-Jazeera satellite television station.

British officials last night played down the warning, suggesting that Saddam Hussein's regime was engaged in propaganda by trying to pretend that Operation Desert Fox, which ended last week after four days of air strikes and with both sides claiming victory, was continuing.

London and Washington also firmly denied Iraqi reports of an incident on Saturday, which an Iraqi military spokesman called an attack on an air defence position. The Ministry of Defence said a pair of RAF Tornados flying in formation over southern Iraq had spotted anti-aircraft fire some five miles away, too far away to be considered a threat.

A ministry spokesman in London said all British and American aircraft "operate to a very strict set of rules of engagement". "If aircraft are threatened those rules of engagement do allow the return of fire," the spokesman said.

In Washington, a spokesman for the US National Security Council said: "There was no attack. We had planes up enforcing the no-fly zone over Iraq, as part of normal operations."

A dozen RAF Tornado GR1 jets are based in Kuwait and took part in the four-day pre-Christmas bombardment of Iraq in Operation Desert Fox. The no-fly zone they are now policing was set up in 1991 to prevent attacks by the regime on the southern Shi'ite Muslim population, then in a state of open rebellion, while a parallel one in the north is designed to protect the Kurds. Iraq calls both zones illegal though Britain and the US insist they were set up under full United Nations authority.

But their position was weakened when France, a fellow member of the UN Security Council, withdrew from patrolling the northern zone two years ago. Baghdad sees Paris, along with Moscow, as a key ally against the Anglo-American hard line in the diplomatic disarray that has followed Desert Fox. Mr Ramadan appeared to be playing on that theme when he alluded to the fact that French planes had stopped patrolling.

The key question now for the UN is what or who will replace the arms inspectors of the UN Special Commission, Unscom, charged with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Unscom's certification is required before the punitive economic sanctions imposed on Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 can be lifted.

On Saturday the Iraqi parliament issued a decree reiterating Baghdad's total refusal to allow the inspectors back into the country. "Now the issue of the Special Commission and its inspections is finished and that is final," Mr Ramadan said.

"This commission does not have any role or mission any more even in the sick American-British mind . . . they finished it by firing rockets and bombs in their last aggression," he said.

Signs of mounting pressure on Washington and London came from Jordan yesterday, where the Speaker of the Iraqi parliament, Sa'adoun Hammadi, lobbied fellow Arab MPs to flout sanctions in protest against the air raids.

And there were fresh indications that the attacks had been less than totally effective in terms of weakening the regime when an Iraqi television station owned by President Saddam's eldest son, Uday, resumed broadcasting on Saturday night, just nine days after it was hit.

Smart card that is smarter still

Tim Radford
Science Editor

BRITISH defence scientists have opened the way for "smart" credit cards that will remind you of how much you have spent, every time you look at them. They have produced a form of plastic liquid crystal display (LCD) that goes on showing the bad news even when there is no power supply.

A trio of electronics experts at Dera, the Defence Evaluation Research Agency, at Malvern, say their invention could be the ultimate flexible friend: a display on a credit card that you could bend, twist, flex, drop, tread on or let drop into the bath — and it would still go on telling you the ugly truth.

LCD is a piece of now-familiar magic in black and white: two thin sheets enclose a curious liquid with crystal properties. Selected little segments or pixels will change colour when voltage is applied. But switch off the power, and the message is lost as the LCD reverts to one colour. Until now, the liquid crystal has only spelt out the message when there is a battery attached.

But the Malvern team have now patented Zebedee, or ZBD: zenithal bistable displays. Zebedee will mean that with each swipe through a cash machine, a credit card could update the sum spent so far in the magnetic strip on the reverse — and then display the update on the front.

The discovery is sure to give another huge push to a cashless revolution already beginning in Europe.

Experts predict that by 2002 the smart card industry will be heading for the £2 billion mark, with almost 4 billion cards in circulation.

Size is no problem for Zebedee: Guy Bryan-Brown and his colleagues, Carl Brown and Cliff Jones, worked with sheets of plastic containing corrugations only thousandths of a millimetre across to make their magic material, nicknamed after a character in the children's TV programme The Magic Roundabout.

But the first use is likely to be in simple smart card displays: London Transport has already announced plans to issue smart cards that will pay fares as the commuter steps on to a bus or walks into a station: the scheme could, managers claim, save £30 million a year now lost in ticket fraud.

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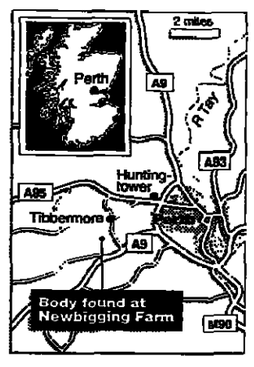
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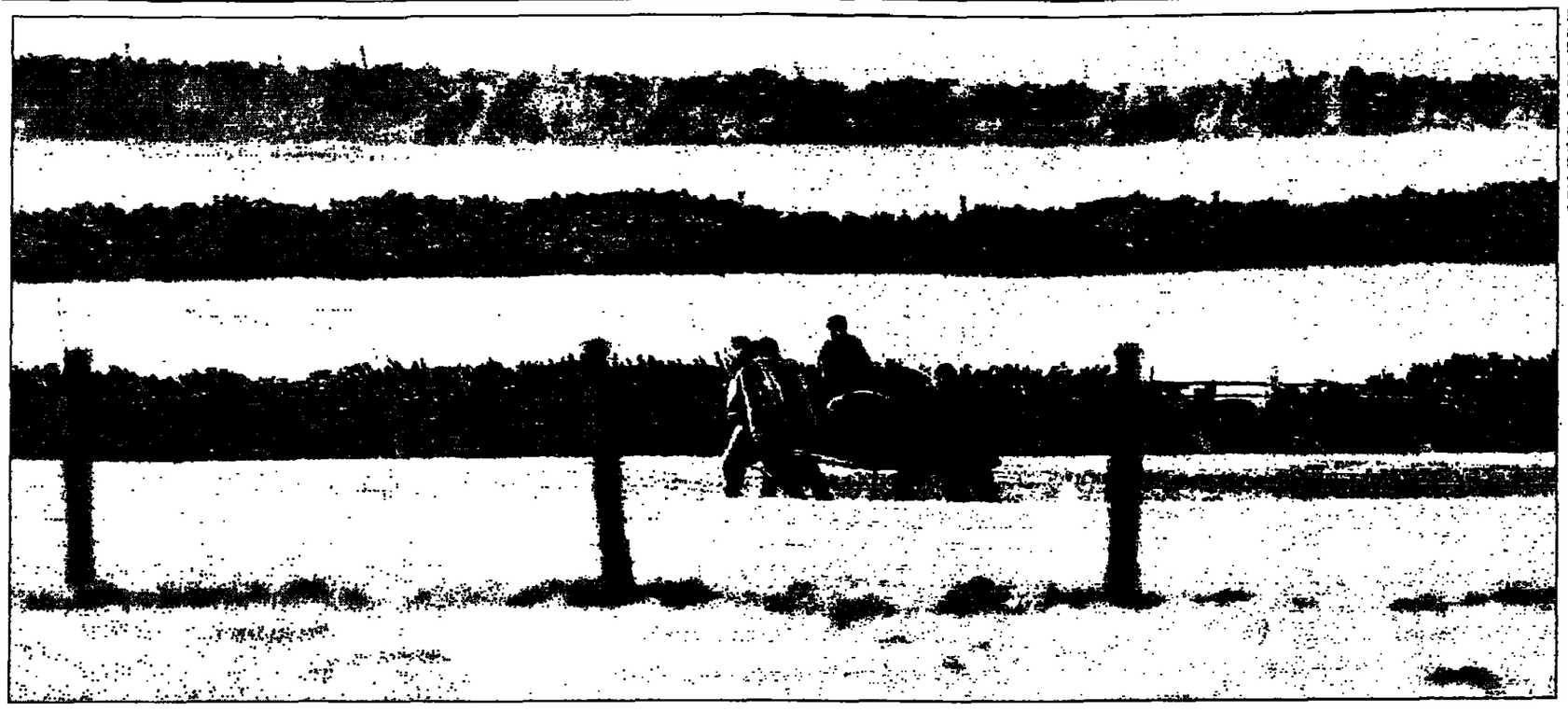
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Police carry away the body of Sally Greig (top left), after it was discovered in an isolated field outside Perth yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS BACON

Body of missing 18-year-old woman found in field

Walk homeward from party late on Christmas Eve may have ended in death from hypothermia

Will Woodward

A BODY found yesterday in a field is that of the missing Scottish 18-year-old, Sally Greig.

A post mortem examination had last night yet to establish the cause of her death, but it was believed she may have died of hypothermia in the early hours of Christmas Eve.

Detective Superintendent Ian Watson of Tayside police said yesterday: "I can say that her clothing was intact."

Miss Greig, a dental assistant from Perth, was found in a field at Newbigging farm, 2½ miles from the Huntingtower Hotel in Huntingtower, a village near Perth. She had left the hotel on foot around 11.30pm on December 23.

The driver of a car spotted a woman matching Miss Greig's description about an hour later in the Tibbermore area, walking along an isolated road running west from Huntingtower.

The driver and her family spoke to the woman because they were concerned she was out so late. It is believed she was offered a lift but declined.

Miss Greig's body was found by an RAF helicopter which joined 50 police officers taking part in the two-day search. An extensive search of streets surrounding the hotel had proved fruitless, as had a search of the banks of the nearby River Tay.

Det Supt Watson said: "An RAF helicopter was able to join the search because of a break in the weather, and after an hour spotted the body of a young female lying in a field."

Miss Greig's parents, Brian and Barbara, attended a post mortem at 4pm yesterday.

Miss Greig was a popular teenager who enjoyed clubbing. On Christmas Day and Boxing Day, Mr and Mrs Greig had made an emotional plea for her safe return.

At an earlier news conference Mr Greig, a sub-postmaster, said: "Sally is a normal teenager who likes to go out to pubs and clubs."

Close to tears, he told the news conference that he was baffled by her disappearance: "She's an intelligent, level-headed girl. This is way out of character for her. Why she left on her own I don't know. It doesn't matter if she's in trouble or there's something wrong — it just doesn't matter. I just want her to get in touch."

Mrs Greig, a nursery nurse aged 35, added that although her daughter lived away, she kept in touch: "She phones me all the time. We hear from her every day.

"Sally is a lovely girl. This is completely unlike her. We were expecting her home on Christmas Eve but we haven't heard a thing."

The couple were too distraught to speak about the death last night.

A member of staff at the Huntingtower Hotel said: "It was just a normal Christmas party night. There were a few Christmas parties going on in the hotel. None of the staff here saw Sally or spoke to her."

Early reports that she had been seen at another nightclub, the Jazz Bank, after leaving the hotel were being discounted by some police sources.

Miss Greig was a dental assistant at the Cherrybank Dental Centre in Perth. She shared a flat with a friend in Perth. She had one brother and one sister.

The Guardian Christmas appeal

The Guardian's Christmas appeal offers readers the chance to donate to up to eight charities. Today, **Helen Carter** reports on the work of the Free Form Arts Trust

Trust makes an art form out of urban revewal

FOR almost 30 years, the Free Form Arts Trust has been striving to improve the environment for people in deprived areas of Britain.

Its work at the heart of urban regeneration has included tiling pedestrian subways in central London to make them more attractive and encouraging shopkeepers in Bolton to renovate their shop fronts.

The trust helped parents in Hackney, east London, to raise money for a hydrotherapy pool for disabled children.

In Reading, Berkshire, it set up a competition for artists to produce works in a £2.2 million public arts programme.

At Fish Quay in North Shields, Tyne and Wear, the trust took the risk of developing a building as an arts centre, which has visitors flocking to festivals there. Free Form also set up the Slough Young People's Centre, used by hundreds of teenagers.

Kofi Osei-Owusu was given hope for the future thanks to Free Form. When he left Thames Valley University in Slough 18 months ago he had finished a Higher National Diploma in product design but was £2,000 in debt. The course was winding down, and many of the lecturers had left the university.

Mr Osei-Owusu worked long hours in temporary, low-paid jobs, which barely made a dent in his debt. "I was trying to get a job in design, but because I hadn't experience with computers or a decent portfolio of work I couldn't find anything," he said.

"I wanted to eventually go back into education. I applied for some other courses but didn't get in. I was running out of momentum. "There were so many things against me when I left university. I had planned to set up my own business, but I was far away from that goal."

Thanks to Free Form his life was transformed. He won a competition run by the trust to design a logo, which encouraged him to look for work. It took him on for work experience, and a newsletter he designed impressed his bosses.

"Eventually Free Form advertised for an in-house designer at the centre, and I was delighted to get the job."

Now he is a project assistant, in charge of in-house design. His studio is kitted out with computers, a printer, drawing boards, graphics equipment and a scanner.

He is working with a graffiti artist and with a photographer who is struggling to build up a portfolio of his work, which he says he must have if he is to get a career going.

Mr Osei-Owusu, born in West Africa, has lived in Slough since he was seven. "I would have loved to have something like the centre when I was younger. It is a place where young people can be heard, and they are not discriminated against. When I was younger I didn't have the chance to gain such valuable skills."

Now aged 23, he is in a position to give other young people skills to help them build up their portfolios and seek work.

The centre has piloted projects such as a drugs awareness programme, a drop-in advice service, careers and job support, and it hosts the Prince's Trust volunteer programme.

Mr Osei-Owusu realised how lucky he has been when he attended a university reunion. "Around 80 per cent of the people on my course are not working in art-related industries because they cannot get a job.

"It brought it home to me that if I didn't have the opportunity to work for the Free Form Arts Trust, I would probably be working in a printer's shop."



Kofi Osei-Owusu, whose career prospects were transformed when he won a trust competition PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEAVER

Fostering creativity

☐ The Free Form Arts Trust was founded in 1969 in Hackney, east London, to help people to enhance public spaces through their creative efforts. It became a charity six years later.

☐ It brings together artists and architects to help people to develop ideas and to contribute to the design and planning of buildings.

☐ It sets up and runs workshops to help people to discover their skills, focusing on overcoming the effects of poverty or social exclusion.

☐ Within three years the trust hopes to move to new premises at London Fields in Hackney, east London. The project, costing £1.5 million, will enable it to provide more space for workshops, exhibitions and studios.

☐ Free Form's wide range of projects include improvements to housing estates, public spaces, hospitals and other public buildings, as well as playgrounds and schools.

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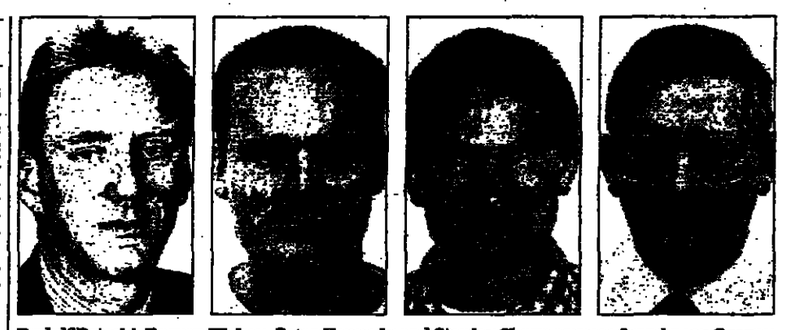
Telecom workers' bodies identified in Chechenia

Tom Whitehouse in Moscow and Amelia Gentleman

FOUR headless bodies found in Chechenia on Boxing Day are those of the three British men and their New Zealand colleague who were murdered by their kidnappers in Russia's breakaway region earlier this month, British diplomats confirmed yesterday.

The corpses of the telecommunications workers were found dumped on the outskirts of the capital, Grozny. Their severed heads were found by a roadside in the west of the region on December 8. The heads and bodies could be returned to their families in Britain today, if negotiations with the Chechen authorities go smoothly.

A British embassy spokesman said: "We have been in touch with the medical people in Chechenia. They have said the bodies are ours and we have accepted this."



Rudolf Petschi, Darren Hickey, Peter Kennedy and Stanley Shaw: corpses found near Grozny

Chechen officials said the bodies of Darren Hickey, Rudolf Petschi, Peter Kennedy and Stanley Shaw would begin their journey home today. But a legal-diplomatic dispute already threatens to delay their return. It is not possible to fly the corpses home directly from Chechenia. A Chechen official said they would be sent to the British embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan, with which Chechenia enjoys good relations. The Chechen government is thought to oppose sending the bodies via Moscow as it might imply that Chechenia is still a part of Russia.

Due to the kidnapping threat, no British official has been sent to Grozny to aid the return. A firm of Russian undertakers has been employed to escort them home.

The four men were sent to Grozny to install a cellular phone system. In October, they were kidnapped by bandits. They were later executed by their captors, following a bungled rescue attempt.

Eamonn Hickey, father of Darren, said last night: " At least there will be a funeral."

Model of fitness for larger sizes

Vivek Chaudhary Sports Correspondent

IF YOUR calorie count is climbing over the festive period don't fret. Astrid Longhurst is here.

But unlike other fitness teachers, who barely shed a drop of sweat after a workout, Ms Longhurst's fitness video, which goes on sale today, is designed to help larger people.

Ms Longhurst, aged 38 and a defiant size 20, is gaining popularity with the message that you can be large, proud and fit.

In the new year her robust workouts will be featured on GMTV's morning show and her video, The ABC Workout — Any Body Can, is to be sold at clothes shops catering for large people.

Ms Longhurst said: "Society has an ideal shape and size and that is equated with fitness. But when people see me they realise that you can be large and fit. Not all people who are a size 10 are necessarily fit."

A trained dancer, she spent most of her teenage years obsessed with being thin. She had bulimia and constantly tried to lose weight to fit in with other dancing students.

"I would stand on the scales every morning, and if I had lost a pound I would be happy and if I had not I would be miserable. But coming to the realisation that I don't have to be thin has been brilliant. I am a much better person; I am much kinder to myself."

Last summer she was featured on GMTV for four weeks. Dozens of people wrote in to say that seeing someone large doing fitness training had encouraged them to get fit. According to statistics, 61 per cent of men and 52 per cent of women in Britain are overweight.

Ms Longhurst's emergence as the largest fitness instructor is welcomed by fitness and diet groups. An Exercise Association spokeswoman said: "It's great to see someone like Astrid being promoted on television. A lot of large people are too embarrassed to go to the gym. Having someone the same size will make them feel comfortable."



Astrid Longhurst . . . large, proud and fit

NUS attacks 'shambolic' loans body

John Carvel Education Editor

STUDENT leaders yesterday accused the Government agency responsible for providing maintenance loans to undergraduates of shambolic standards of administration.

Andrew Pakes, president of the National Union of Students, said the Glasgow-based Student Loans Company was causing financial hardship by taking up to six weeks to process applications, in spite of a pledge to do the job within seven days.

"The Student Loans Company is in danger of defaulting on its public service agreement and failing to meet its efficiency and performance targets. The current claim of a seven-day turnaround for loan applications is a sham," said Mr Pakes.

A spokeswoman for the loan company said the NUS should have drawn the company's attention to any cases of difficulty so that it could provide prompt assistance.

Complaints by the NUS appeared to be based on a confusion between the role of the company and the job done by loan administrators in colleges and universities, she said.

According to the "catalogue of shame" published by the union:

☐ a student at Southampton Institute had to leave before the end of term to take a temporary job because he was waiting for a loan applied for on the day he enrolled — the company said his bank details — the same supplied the previous year — were incorrect;

☐ a student at Roehampton Institute, west London, had to wait eight weeks for a loan, filling out five forms in the process, including one form twice;

☐ applications to the hardship fund at the University of Portsmouth doubled because of delayed loan payments;

☐ a Brighton student in "extreme hardship" pawned jewellery to raise cash;

☐ application forms bound for Warwick university were sent to a warehouse in Birmingham;

☐ only 400 application forms were provided to Glasgow university when it had asked for 700, making some students wait three weeks before they could apply;

☐ forms also ran out at Dundee, Liverpool, Leeds, Aberdeen, Strathclyde, Glasgow Caledonian Paisley, and Heriot-Watt universities.

Mr Pakes said many students were unable to contact the company because its customer helpline was swamped.

The company's spokeswoman said the union was focusing on half a dozen isolated cases, none of which could be attributed to the company. The company's booklet said: "Once we receive and validate the completed agreement and direct debit instruction, we will make a payment to your bank account, ususally within seven working days."

In a separate development, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors reported yesterday that 14 education authorities were "significantly behind schedule" in means-testing students to establish if they could have the tuition fee.

As late as November, nearly 20 per cent of students had not been assessed. Diana Warwick, the chief executive, said the situation had improved, and overall the authorities responded "reasonably well".

هكذا من الاصل

Storms kill four

Hurricane strength winds leave trail of death and mayhem

Sarah Hall

FOUR people, including a five-year-old boy, were killed and a fifth was last night feared dead after hurricane-force winds of up to 110mph lashed Britain and Ireland over Christmas.

Snow and rain wreaked havoc, with roads closed, travel disrupted, and thousands left without electricity. The battering is set to continue, with forecasters predicting more severe weather for western parts of Britain from tonight.

In North Wales, the youngest casualty of the storms, five-year-old Mark Huxley, died in a car crash caused by gale force winds, after his mother's car smashed into branches blown on to the road at Eglwys Cross, before colliding with a Saab late on Boxing Day. Gillian Huxley, from Whitchurch, Shropshire, was taken to hospital with neck injuries.

In the Irish Republic, Michael Joyce, aged 26, was killed when a falling tree crushed his car near the village of Maam Cross in Galway.

In Northern Ireland, a 24-year-old man died yesterday morning at Comber, Londonderry, after his car crashed into a tree blown across the road.

Meanwhile, in Devon, a 44-year-old man was swept to his death as he stood at the bottom of his garden watching the rain-swollen River Ashburn.

Paul Witt, from Ashburton, is thought to have stumbled into the flood waters at around lunchtime on Boxing Day. A helicopter from RAF Chivenor searched for his body that afternoon, and members of the Dartmoor rescue group found it yesterday morning, half a mile downstream.

As the death toll rose, the search was called off for a 28-year-old man presumed drowned after being dragged out to sea by a 30ft wave off the coast at Brighton, in East Sussex.

The man, who has not yet been named, was taking a Boxing Day walk near the Palace Pier with his 41-year-old girlfriend and her 21-year-old son when the two men stripped off to take a swim. The son was struck by a wave and knocked back on to the beach, but the 28-year-old, from Tonbridge, Kent, was swept into the sea.

He was then briefly spotted by a rescue helicopter, but disappeared. The search resumed yesterday morning but bad weather forced it to be abandoned.

At the other end of Britain, a 16-year-old girl was in hospital with severe head injuries after being struck by a chimney stack blown off a roof in Rothesay on the Isle of Bute, off the west coast of Scotland.

Louise Bennett, from Rothesay, was last night described as in a "serious" condition at Inverclyde Royal Infirmary, Greenock.

As gusts of up to 100mph hit Scotland, ScotRail said winds had severely hampered services. Wind, severe flooding and fallen trees also closed many roads throughout the country.

The fierce gales also left thousands in the dark after bringing down power lines. In the Republic of Ireland, 70,000 homes were without electricity for a second night last night, while 20,000 were powerless in Northern Ireland. At the height of the storm, 160,000 homes were cut off in the province and 50,000 in Ulster.

In Scotland, 10,000 out of an original 60,000 were last night still without power, and in Lancashire and Cumbria, 3,000 remained stricken. It is hoped power will return to all homes by this evening.

As parts of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Cumbria and Northumberland awoke to snow this morning, forecasters said today's milder weather was, for many, a lull before a storm. Western Scotland, Northern Ireland and the West of England are set to be lashed until Wednesday by torrential rain and gales of up to 55mph.



SCOTLAND: In Glasgow, the steeple of St Stephen's Church was blown into the church MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: CRAWFORD BROWN



NORTH-EAST ENGLAND: Wrecked caravans in Northumberland



NORTHERN IRELAND: A Belfast factory roof is blown onto houses



SOUTH-WEST ENGLAND: A Harbertonford, Devon, pub defies floods

BBC wins yuletide ratings battle

Sarah Hall

THE BBC has upheld its festive tradition by beating ITV for Christmas Day viewers.

True to the spirit of Christmas past, the corporation broadcast the most popular programme of the day — and seven of the top 10 most-watched shows.

For the second year running, Men Behaving Badly lured the greatest audience, with 13.9 million viewers tuning in. In contrast, 5.9 million tuned in to ITV at the same time to watch Christmases from Hell, a documentary on seasonal disasters.

In the battle of the soaps, EastEnders reasserted its supremacy over Coronation Street: 13.9 million watched Bianca give birth in the Queen Vic, while 13.5 million watched the double delivery of Judy's twins in the Street.

The BBC news attracted nearly 9 million more viewers than its commercial rival — 13.1 million against 4.7 million.

Even the Queen's Christmas broadcast — with 10.4 million viewers, 2 million fewer than last year — proved more popular on the BBC: 7.3 million, compared with 3.1 million seeing it on ITV.

The unofficial, overnight figures were greeted with delight by Peter Salmon, controller of BBC1, who said the corporation was very proud of its range of Christmas offerings and promised "a lot more crackers still to come".

ITV also insisted it was "absolutely delighted" with the figures and said it was rapidly encroaching on the BBC's audience share.

A spokeswoman said that the top three placements could shift once the official British Audience Research Bureau (Barb) figures, incorporating videotaped programmes, are released in nine days' time.

"The top three programmes are very close together. People often video soaps and we may well find Coronation Street, or possibly EastEnders, in the number one position," she said.

The top 10 TV programmes were: Men Behaving Badly (BBC1) 13.9 million; EastEnders (8.30pm, BBC1) 13.9m; Coronation Street (ITV) 13.5m; They Think It's All Over (BBC1) 12.1m; Before They Were Famous (BBC1) 11.4m; You've Been Framed (ITV) 10.7m; Emmerdale (ITV) 10.1m; EastEnders (5.25pm, BBC1) 9.6m; Aunty's Spanking New Bloomers (BBC1) 9.1m; Babe (BBC1) 8.8m.

Kate Adie rails at 'crudity' of MI6 officer's attack on her

Richard Norton-Taylor

AN ARTICLE in the Spectator magazine written by an MI6 officer under a false name was described yesterday by Kate Adie, the BBC's chief news corespondent, as a crude fabrication.

Ms Adie said she would have demanded an immediate correction if she had been alerted to the article, in March 1994, sooner. She was staggered and puzzled by its "crudity of the distortion".

She was singled out in an article attacking British journalists written, with a Sarajevo dateline, under the name of Kenneth Roberts during the civil war in Bosnia.

Under the headline, Glamour without responsibility, the magazine described the author as working "with the UN forces in Bosnia", and said his name had been changed "at his request". Mr Roberts, it pointed out, "says that journalists there should be held accountable for their actions".

Mr Roberts said Ms Adie had reported "yet another atrocity against the Muslims, perpetrated by the Croats. The following day, the reporter corrected the facts of the story but not before the warped version had drawn a complaint from the Croatian government."

The MI6 officer was referring to a massacre of Croats by the Bosnian army in the village of Uzdol.

The article was wrong in every respect: Ms Adie did not blame the Croats, she did not correct her report since it was accurate, and it did not prompt a Croat complaint.

She had identified the culprits and the victims. "The Bosnian army descended on Uzdol, then withdrew leaving terrible evidence of their brief visit," she told BBC television viewers in September 1993. She spoke of "systematic slaughter" and "wholesale killing" of Croat civilians.

Yesterday, she accused the author — who has now left MI6 — of writing a "complete fabrication".

She added: "What staggered me was the crudity of it. I went to Uzdol with the British army and European Union verification monitors."

The BBC had not drawn her attention to the article. She became aware of it last year; by that time it was too late to respond..

She said: "I would like to put the record straight, particularly as it seems to me to be such a crude attempt to distort the reputation of journalists who had the difficult task of reporting Bosnia and discovering who was truly responsible for some of the more horrendous acts."

This month, before disclosing that the author was an MI6 officer, the Guardian approached Dominic Lawson, editor of the Spectator at the time. He denied any knowledge of an MI6 link.

In a column in last week's Sunday Telegraph, which he now edits, he said it was "probably right" that "Kenneth Roberts" was an MI6 officer.

Mr Lawson was named this month in the Commons as an agent working for MI6 — an allegation which he denied.

Former IRA chief who opposed sectarianism dies at 75

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

CATHAL Goulding, the former IRA chief of staff, died aged 75 on Saturday at a hospital in Dublin.

Goulding, who spent a total of 15 years in jail, was a committed Marxist. In 1969 he was left heading the Official IRA after the terrorist group split with the founding of the hardline Provisionals.

Born in Dublin, Goulding disagreed with those living on the frontline of the Troubles who wanted arms to resist loyalist gangs. He viewed that as sectarianism when he saw British imperialism as the real enemy.

He was much criticised among republicans because he embraced the political approach at a time when Catholics were being burned out of their homes. He was an advocate of Sinn Fein taking its place in the Irish parliament.

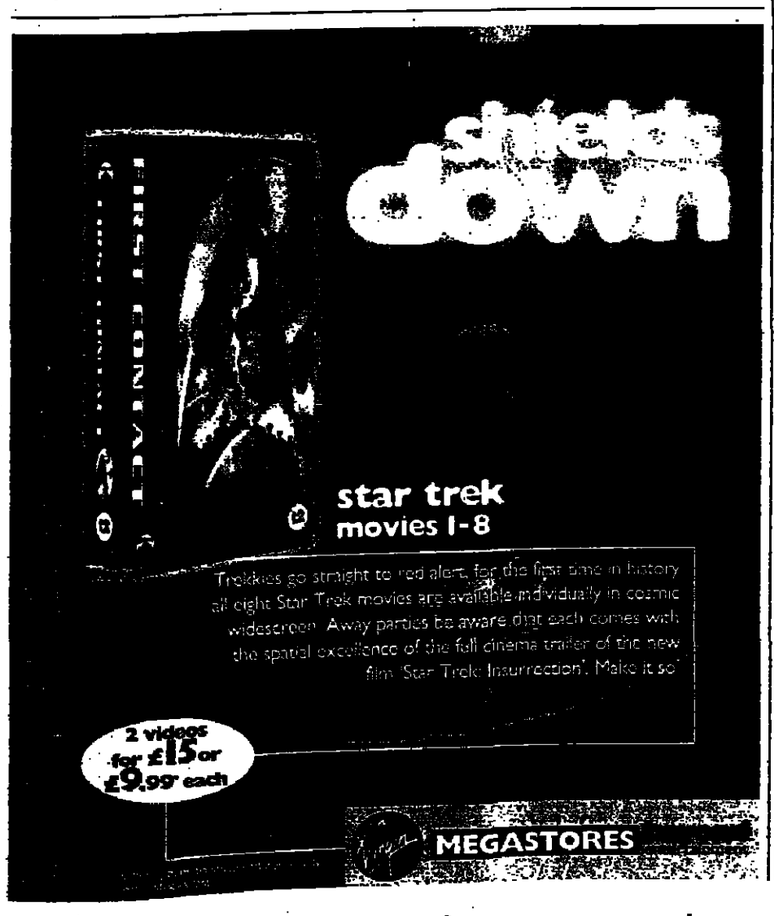
Goulding, a house painter, was jailed in 1953 for eight years for an arms raid on the cadet armoury at Felstead School in Essex, which netted 108 rifles and eight Bren guns. He spent his time in Pentonville Prison, and altogether spent 15 years behind bars.

He brought the Official IRA to permanent ceasefire in 1972, after it shot dead William Best of the Royal Irish Rangers.

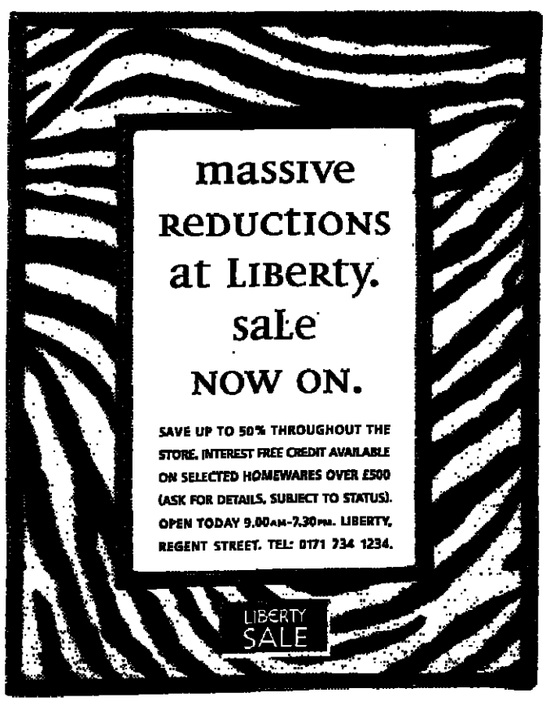
Goulding became a prominent figure in the Workers' Party, the political wing of the OIRA. It later became Democratic Left and he remained a supporter.

Asked why he had become IRA chief of staff, he said: "Well, I suppose I must have outlived the others."

Obituary, page 10



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THE LUDICROUSLY AFFORDABLE SALE.

John Hooper in Rome reports on signs that the Great Jubilee in 2000 may prove his biggest challenge yet

Pope falters as Holy Year beckons



The Pope faces a difficult year as he battles against his failing health and makes plans for the celebration of the 2000th anniversary of Christ's birth

THERE was a small, sad change in the Pope's sermon given at Midnight Mass in St Peter's in Rome. The text made available earlier to journalists had him saying: "My thoughts already turn to Christmas next year when, God willing, I shall inaugurate the Great Jubilee."

What he actually said was: "...when, God willing, *the Church* will inaugurate the Great Jubilee."

It might have been accidental. But those who cover the Vatican assume that everything which emanates from it has a significance.

Pope John Paul is known to be determined to lead his billion-strong Church through the most momentous Holy Year it has ever celebrated — the commemoration of the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's birth. But his health is failing visibly. He is no longer, it would seem, assuming that it will be he who knocks at the Holy Door, the main entrance to St Peter's, on December 24 1999 in the ceremony that launches the Great Jubilee.

Holy Years have been celebrated since 1300, normally at 25-year intervals. But this will be the first to coincide with the start of a millennium.

The year ahead will be an unusually demanding one both for the Pope and his officials as they plan the Holy Year events and arrange for the arrival in Rome of an estimated 26 million pilgrims.

Several questions still hang over the Jubilee. The Pope has frequently expressed the hope that he will be allowed to visit the Middle East in 2000. The Vatican would like to see him make a journey retracing the life of the patriarch Abraham, who is revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike — a pilgrimage that could offer a basis for greater understanding between the three religions.

Raphael Bidawid, Iraq's Roman Catholic Patriarch, said last month that the Pope's visit to the lands of the Old Testament might take place in November next year.

There has long been speculation that the Holy Year might also include a ceremony in Rome involving representatives from several religions and denominations. But as yet there are no firm plans for either the Middle Eastern pilgrimage or the ecumenical ceremony.

In the meantime the Pope will have to cope with the normal routine of a pontiff — a round of engagements involving high-profile international trips.

His first is a visit to Mexico at the end of January that is planned to lead on to a meeting in St. Louis with President Bill Clinton. This is unlikely to be a particularly warm encounter after details of Mr Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky and Operation Desert Fox in Iraq.

The Vatican is, on principle, opposed to any action that subjects innocent civilians to suffering. This is particularly true of countries, like Iraq, with sizeable Catholic populations — some 200,000 in Iraq's case.

The Pope's hatred of communism, moreover, has tended to obscure the fact that the US permits many of the things to which he is most opposed. In his traditional *Urbi et Orbi* (to the city and the world) Christmas Day message, he called for "urgent and adequate measures to halt the production of arms, defend human life, and ban the death penalty". Bearing in mind that "defend human life" is the Vatican's code for "stop abortion", all three of those strictures could have been aimed directly at the US.

In Rome the Pope's attention will be focused on a synod, scheduled for the autumn, which will bring together bishops from two contrasting directions. In western Europe there are bishops who would like to see greater participation by the laity, a wider role for women and more tolerance of homosexuality. Their pressure for further reforms runs counter to the stance taken by many Catholics in eastern Europe who, isolated from the mainstream of the Church for almost half a century under communism, are still coming to terms with the liberalisation introduced by the Second Vatican Council which ended in 1965.

Such fundamental differences pose a clear threat. The last thing the Vatican wants is for open dissension at next year's synod, so close to the start of the Holy Year when world attention will be increasingly focused on Rome and the Roman Catholic Church.

France clamps down on reckless skiers

Paul Webster in Paris

SKIERS who fail to respect basic safety rules could face fines of up to £25,000 at several big Alpine resorts in France as the winter sports season began with weekend warnings of increasing dangers on the slopes.

The mayor of Saint-Martin de-Belleville, Georges Cumin, who is an adviser to the tourist ministry, said new by-laws introduced by his Savoie council, which administers Menuires and Val-Thorens, would enforce 10 measures drawn up by the French ski federation on speed limits, off-piste skiing and warning signs.

His initiative has been followed by other resorts, including Bourg-Saint-Maurice-Les Arcs, which have asked for government help to reduce accidents. In the Vosges region in eastern France mayors have appealed for extra gendarmes or special ski wardens to patrol slopes where there is increasing tension between snowboarders and classic skiers.

Mr Cumin said he introduced the by-laws because there was no legislation enabling police to act against holidaymakers refusing to obey safety rules — unless they caused an accident. The public prosecutor at nearby Albertville, René Ternoy, whose area covers Alpine ski stations such as Courchevel, said there would be a blitz on skiers who broke speed limits on beginners' slopes.

"I will be particularly severe this year," he added, speaking after a case in which a professional skier and his trainer were given a year's suspended jail sentence and disqualified from competitions following a collision which killed a 10-year-old child during a practice run.

Skiing accidents from all causes, including avalanches, leapt by 17 per cent in the 1997-98 season, injuring 41,500 people and killing 32.

The new season which began at Christmas saw record numbers of holidaymakers at all resorts. One in four French people, or roughly 15 million, went on a skiing holiday last year.

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Observers put at risk in Kosovo war



Both the Serbs and the KLA have been building up forces near the northern town of Podujevo, on the main road out of the province into northern Serbia.

Kosovo Liberation Army rebels evacuate a wounded soldier in Lapastica after fighting in northern Kosovo yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: VISAR KRYEZIU

Chris Bird in Belgrade

A TEMPORARY truce was agreed in Kosovo last night to move the wounded to safety after four days of fighting threatened the future of an unarmed international observer mission.

The American diplomat William Walker voiced hope that the "sporadic fighting" could be contained without again engulfing the Serbian province in full-scale war.

Serb forces exchanged fire with ethnic Albanian guerrillas until late yesterday around the village of Obranca, where the funeral of Milovan Radojevic, a 74-year-old Serb shot dead outside his home on Saturday, was to take place.

The upsurge in violence places the unarmed observers, including 70 Britons, in potential danger. Adem Demaci, the political head of the ethnic Albanian guerrilla force, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), said its forces had shot dead Radojevic because he was part of a Serb paramilitary group which had refused to disarm.

Serb officials said yesterday that three policemen had been wounded in the nearby village of Velika Reka when they went to the aid of an elderly Serb farmworker, who they said had been wounded in a KLA attack.

"State organs are ready for a showdown with those who are endangering the integrity of the country," Zoran Andjelkovic, the head of the Serb provisional government in Kosovo said last week.

Mr Demaci said he would urge the KLA to continue to respect its own self-declared ceasefire, announced days before the October agreement between the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, and the US Balkans negotiator, Richard Holbrooke.

"The KLA will continue to respect the ceasefire but the KLA also have to defend themselves," Mr Demaci said yesterday.

Mr Holbrooke forced Mr Milosevic to accept a 2,000-strong international observer mission to "verify compliance" with the deal. But the fledgling mission of unarmed monitors, now totalling about 600, deployed by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), has had a peacekeeping role thrust upon it which it is not mandated or equipped to do.

The KLA was never a party to the October agreement, and confusion reigns.

The observers, the so-called Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), were meant to be at full strength by the end of November but contributing countries appear unwilling to send in monitors when the situation is dangerously unclear. A so-called "extraction force" of 1,800 Nato troops in neighbouring Macedonia is supposed to be on hand to rescue those in danger.

But Mr Milosevic said such an intervention would be taken as an aggressive act. Officially, the 54-member OSCE says the mission should be at full-strength by the end of January.

A senior KVM mission member in Pristina said: "If I were a contributing member I would be very concerned about my people coming here." He also warned that a withdrawal would see thousands of civilian refugees on the move once more.

"If you have to leave here because our people are in great danger what comes next will be a great snowball of violence," the observer said.

The snowball is already growing in size. After the Yugoslav army killed 36 KLA guerrillas smuggling in weapons from Albania on December 14 and when six young Serbs were gunned down in an apparent reprisal attack the same day, ethnic Albanian groups say a further nine ethnic Albanians have been killed. A further three Serbs have also been killed in the smouldering violence.

Bronislaw Geremek, the Polish foreign minister and head of the OSCE, said yesterday: "If the bloodshed and violence escalate the OSCE will have to reconsider the forms of its activity in Kosovo."

Smallest of octuplets dies

Michael Ellison in New York

THE smallest of the world's first surviving set of octuplets died yesterday from heart and lung failure.

Chijindu Chidera, nicknamed Odera, was the fifth child born to Nkem Chukwu and her husband, Iyke Louis Udobi, at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, on December 20. She weighed only 10.3 oz at birth and had always been considered the most vulnerable.

The remaining five girls and two boys, who were born 10 weeks premature, remain in critical condition in the intensive care unit.

The youngest, Gorom, underwent surgery on an intestinal perforation on Saturday. Four of her siblings are now breathing on their own but two still require ventilators. Ms Chukwu, aged 27, was in a stable condition last night.

In a statement the parents, who had been unable to have a child until Ms Chukwu began to take fertility drugs, said: "We are very saddened by the passing of our beloved baby Odera. She is now safe with God in heaven and we remain most grateful to Him for blessing our lives with hers." They also thanked the hospital and added: "We also want to thank people all over the world for their prayers for our family in this special time."



The parents, Nkem Chukwu and Iyke Louis Udobi

But the birth of the octuplets has sparked a debate about medical ethics. One expert, Dr Arthur Caplan, said: "We need to rethink our fascination with multiple births.

"Ironically, if a woman in America has eight babies in a row, one each year for eight years, our government says she is irresponsible.

"But if a couple has eight babies all at once, the very same government steps forward to pay for the costs of their care, and private industry is quick to volunteer assistance as well."

The family has been in contact with Wes Yoder, the Nashville agent who struck deals for Bobbi and Kenny McCaughey of Iowa, who had septuplets 13 months ago. Mr Yoder secured a new house and a bigger van for them but less has been forthcoming for the Chukwu babies.

Mr Udobi, aged 41, said yesterday: "We're going to need all the donations we can get. You can see I'm not a millionaire. I work two to three jobs to make ends meet.

"Tell the world I need a bigger house. No matter how many rooms I have here in this house, it won't be enough. I need everything. We need more furniture. I need a bigger van, one with 15 seats at least."

So far they have been promised a lifetime supply of nappies, baby wipes and training pants; a year's supply of groceries and baby milk; eight cots and car seats; and mobile phones.

Unita 'downed UN plane'

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

ANGOLAN state radio has accused Unita rebels of shooting down a United Nations plane on Saturday with 14 people on board.

UN officials said they had no idea if anyone on board the Hercules C-130 transport plane escaped. Nor could they say whether the crash was the result of an attack, as claimed by the government.

Unita said whatever happened to the plane was the government's fault for allowing it to fly in a combat zone.

The plane burst into flames shortly after taking off from the besieged city of Huambo. It is believed to have hit the ground about 15 miles away.

Unita laid siege to Huambo and the city of Cuito earlier this month as a four-year-old peace accord disintegrated. Rebel shelling killed more than 30 people in Cuito on Christmas Day. Nine died when a shell hit a church.

The UN World Food Programme yesterday called off all flights in Angola. The halt to aid deliveries will further burden overcrowded cities as thousands flee from Unita advances.

The accord required the Unita leader, Jonas Savimbi, to surrender Unita's weapons and hand over rebel-controlled territory in return for his appointment as vice-president. But Unita clung to its weapons and Mr Savimbi never took up his post.

The Angolan government launched an offensive against Unita two weeks ago, but the military claims the rebels have new weapons funded by the illicit diamond trade.

Last week the UN Security Council accused Unita of undermining the peace accord and demanded an immediate end to the fighting.

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Ethiopia releases professor

Jonathan Steele

PROFESSOR Asrat Woldeyes, one of Ethiopia's best-known political prisoners, has been released and was flying to Britain last night.

The chairman, aged 70, of the All-Amhara People's Organisation (AAPO) was released to receive specialist medical treatment abroad.

Dr Asrat, a British-trained surgeon, has been a prisoner for almost a year in the hospital where he used to work. For three years before that he was held in the central prison in the capital Addis Ababa on charges of planning violent actions against the state and incitement to rebellion.

Dr Asrat was dismissed from his job shortly after he founded the AAPO when the present regime came to power in 1991.

While in prison his health deteriorated and he was transferred to the Black Lion hospital in January 1998. He took a turn for the worse 10 days ago and was moved into intensive care for observation.

It was thought he may have suffered a mild heart attack. Some years ago he had a heart bypass operation in Texas.

Welcoming his release last night, the foreign minister Tony Lloyd said: "I believe this signals a clear commitment by the Ethiopian government to uphold their human rights obligations."

Dr Asrat is expected to stay in a London hospital for a few days before going to Texas.

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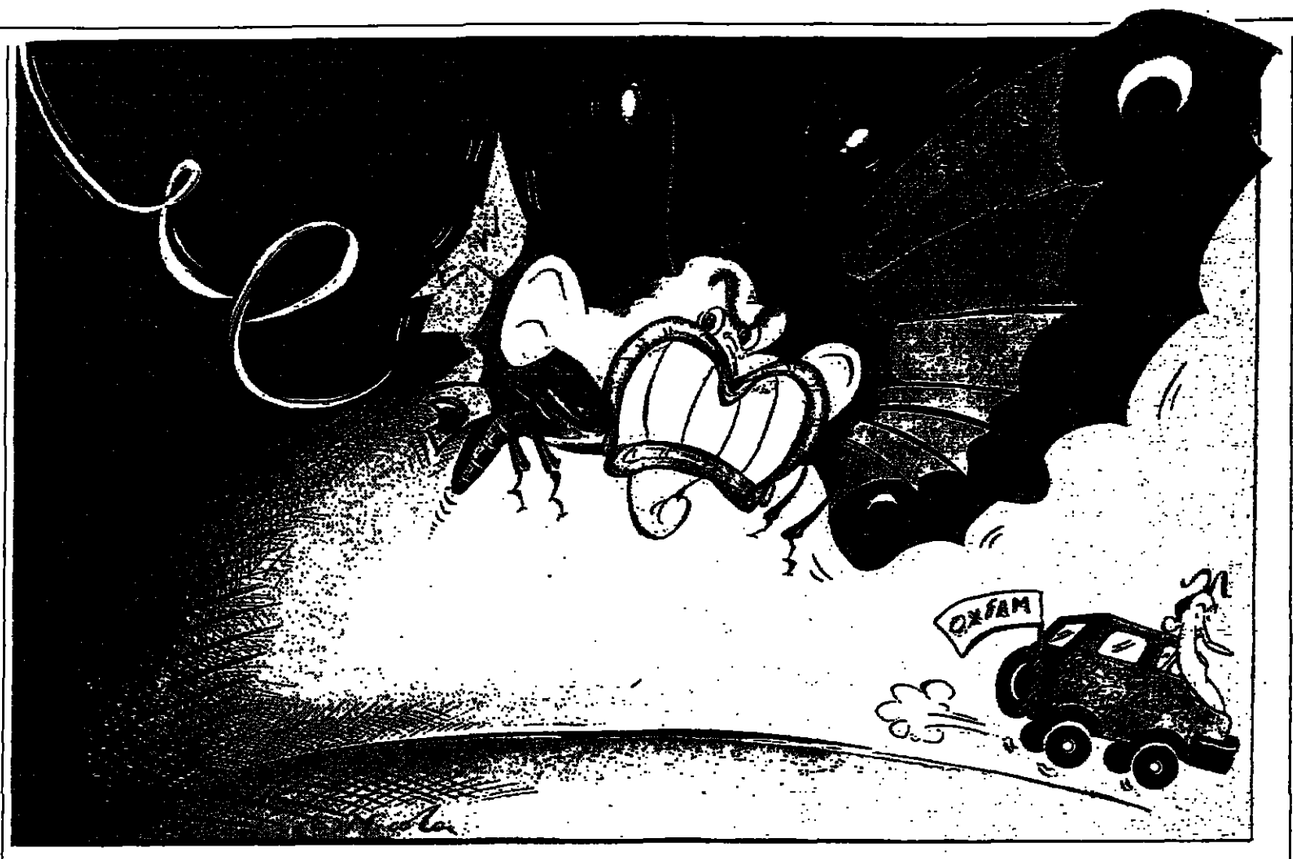
Comment

e-mail

John Gittings
@ Hong Kong

THE news that Tiger Balm Gardens, once Hong Kong's most famous attraction, is to be sold and destroyed, made a Christmas expedition absolutely necessary. Years ago we used to mock at the tourist buses, the mini-pagoda and the hillside covered with gaudy terracotta figures and tableaux. Now the tours only go to the huge shopping complex on top of Hong Kong peak (known, inevitably, as the Peak Experience.) Tiger Balm Gardens, above the racecourse in Happy Valley, has lost most of its harbour view to high-rise buildings, and there are no boutiques. Yet a visit has a calming charm hard to find elsewhere in Hong Kong. Entry is charitably free, beneath some fine old banyan trees. A few stalls sell tiny tins of Tiger Balm ointment, the magical remedy for bites, aching muscles and lumbago. It made a fortune for Aw Boon-haw 70 years ago, whose daughter, the newspaper tycoon Sally Aw is now selling up. Mr Aw's ashes are there under a marble stupa. There is also a statue of his brother Aw Boon Par who "learnt eternal truths from the past". The hillside is sculpted with red, blue and ochre rocks. Implausible turtles, seals and crocs slither down it. There are rampant phoenixes, elongated dragons, and of course tigers. The visitors are ordinary Hong Kong Chinese — not the upwardly mobile who prefer the smart shopping malls. Everyone is taking everyone else's picture: I help someone on his own, who laments the passing of the gardens. "This is a Chinese Cultural Relic," he gravely explains. We pause before a montage of the wedding between Pig and Rabbit. A faded notice explains the moral: "Even the oddest couple can marry if destiny so dictates." Ms Aw, who has financial troubles, is selling out to the even bigger Hong kong property tycoon Li Ka-shing, who owns the adjacent high-rise.

PERHAPS that is also a predestined relationship. Mr Li, who is a friend of Beijing and an enemy of Hong Kong democracy, has long been eyeing the site. He will demolish the green-tiled Aw family mansion and build more luxury housing: the gardens will be replaced by a "theme park". I doubt whether Tiger Balm's themes will survive. At the top of the hillside there is a gloriously tacky terracotta display of the Ten Courts of Hell. Visitors are fascinated by the graphic models of heads being sawn off, entrails being extracted and bodies cast into furnaces. The Fourth Court, says another faded notice, is there to condemn "those who sell fake medicine" and put children to death by pounding with a spiked board. The Aw brothers will have escaped that fate: their ointment works wonders. But it's too late to save their gardens. Would it have been different, if they had charged entry and called it the Tiger Balm Experience?



Never mind all the sanctimonious tosh. We need a better watchdog

Peter Preston



A WEEK in politics (as Labour's most successful Prime Minister once famously remarked) can be rather a long time. So, seven days ago, Saddam Hussein was mopping his brow and Bill Clinton was still sweating profusely — while Peter bought the last presents for his friends, and Tony Blair looked forward to a quiet Christmas with the family.

Was this, the affair of the white house in Notting Hill, the greatest crisis since records began? Hardly: the Leader of the Opposition didn't even cancel his Montana ski-ing holiday.

Does it, at the core, reveal New Labour's fatal fascination with men of money? Overblown tosh: Lord Kagan doled out his Gannexes, and Robert Maxwell his personal propagandisings, from the heart of Old Labour (which still seems to beat its rhythms from Doncaster to the Clyde).

How can the Government we have survive a tidal wave of bile, bitterness and axe-grindings? As easily, or with as much difficulty, as every other government we've had since time began. Brotherhood is the hollowest word in the lexicon. Governments are composed of human beings - and no creed imposed from on high has yet erased their flaws of humanity. Forget the sanctimonious stuff about DTI permanent secretaries and conflicts of this and that. Why, over all those months, didn't Peter mention the loan to his great chum, Tony? Did they never discuss Geoffrey Robinson — ever, once? These were dysfunctional cronies.

Bill Clinton, under the direst pressure, keeps an uncanny cool. He parades, laughing, in public — as though his disasters were kept in a separate box. He doesn't faff and flail down the video line to the Judiciary Committee. But Mr Blair, on yesterday's first radio surfacings, is no Clinton. He's under only modest pressure, but he grinds his teeth to stay on message. He talks of principle when, of course, it was the headlines which drove Mandelson to quit. Why not say so? Why not grieve for a close colleague thus wasted? It is the human thing to do: what makes him different from Clinton?

Reactions in adversity are what define a leader. The President of the United States balances his appaling personal frailty with unbelievable toughness. He loses key aides by the dozen and ploughs on regardless. He is the strongest of weak men — but he is no paradigm. The strength of Blair's appeal is that he's an open, trusting bloke like us: he needs to bleed when he is wounded. It was what we do, too.

The biggest dilemma, the one which matters now, is how our Government and its Leader come to terms with these lessons of humanity — for, balancing between the two white houses, there are lessons and things to be done.

We contrive codes and pass laws to control our human nature. They are often an imperfect fit — the three-ring circus of impeachment bears no relationship in common sense to the groping of the Oval Office. And the people who matter — the ordinary folk, voters in and for democracy — know that; which is why three-quarters of them approve of this President. They have turned their backs on the machinations of political foes and the hunting cries of the press. The mechanisms of "justice" are absurd. They have a better grasp of what fits.

Apply the same tests to the Mandelson debacle. Among the AB voters of London, the rich and the most educated, Labour enjoys a 22 per cent lead on the latest Observer/ICM poll. These are the voters who live in Notting Hill and Chelsea and Hampstead, and they have deserted the Conservatives. Are they to be shocked over a £475,000 house or a walloping mortgage? Do they remember what they told their building society years ago — apart from the promise to keep paying up on schedule? Too much outrage here becomes synthetic because it leaves common sense behind.

And do they (in just the same way) live their own lives by what the code of conduct for ministers defines as the "appearance" as well as the reality of impropriety or conflict of interest?

THESE are lines absurdly drawn. They put Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter (who merely lusted in his heart, but felt compelled to confess it) in the same wide basket of shame. They make errors of judgment the ruin of careers. They are impossible rules for an imperfect world — ones the politicians can do something about.

Tony Blair should know this, because he is already doing something. He asked the Neill committee to look at the funding of political parties. They have, amongst other matters, advocated proper cash to maintain a proper Opposition scrutiny. That, implemented, puts the lid on all the otherwise intractable problems of blind trusts and cash to keep offices like Gordon Brown's decently staffed. It blows the grey areas away — just as, at Westminster, the appointment of a powerful Parliamentary Commissioner has provided a clear process for the disclosure of interests. Should Peter Mandelson, as a backbencher, have registered his loan? There is a trusted way for determining that already in motion.

A logical Prime Minister would now move to re-examine his own backyard. He has his windy code of injunctions for ministers, but no-one to enforce it apart from himself. The benighted Cabinet Secretary is still summoned to the colours in perfunctory desperation; the Downing Street press machine still acquits in a moment then reconsiders at leisure. There is no independent examiner of what was done and what should be done. Time is the greatest enemy.

That denies a minister in a mess any reasonable hearing. It mires the Prime Minister from day one. It makes the "appearance" of headlines the supposed reality of judgement. In sum, it kills any chance of perspective.

The practical lesson of the week before last is that the appearance of perjury before a baying court of politicians is an offence against reality. The practical lesson of last week is that the question of non-disclosure without any court to examine it is an equal affront.

You can't shield your home from all the foul gales of humanity; but you can shut the windows and bolt the doors. You can do something useful. Seven more days (in the Seychelles, or Montana) ought to bring a little reflection, and then a little utility.

It could be very destructive if the US and Europe fall out in the New Year

Trouble ahead

Martin Woollacott



THE contrast between Europe and America as they enter the new year is sharply drawn. America, its political class riven by the civil war over Clinton, and some of its international policies repudiated by its allies, is much weakened. Europe, most of its governments ideologically in line and its leaders drawing together to make the common currency a success, is strengthened. The relationship between old allies, rivals, and friends is shifting. At the same time differences between the two continents in their approach to both internal politics and international affairs — differences which had been partially subsumed during the Cold War — are reasserting themselves. And the long Clinton catastrophe, combined with familiar European reactions to US policy, could mean there is trouble ahead for the most durable, reliable, and settled political axis in the world.

Whatever happens in Washington, it is hard to see the two American parties forgiving one another easily, even if a censure solution in the Senate engenders a momentary bipartisan glow. Clinton may be history, but he is going to continue to be history, poisonous and contentious history, for quite a long time to come. Americans, the political scientist and sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset has written, "tend to view social and political dramas as morality plays, as battles between God and the Devil, so that compromise is virtually unthinkable". The polls may suggest that many Americans no longer take that position, but the Republicans believe they know better, and they may be right. America's historic pattern of what Lipset calls "moral absolutism" is perhaps reasserting itself, or, rather, becoming more difficult to accommodate. For the half century of the Cold War, America's crusading style was acceptable abroad, and was often suppressed at home, in the interest of the larger struggle with Communism. Now, it may be back in domestic politics with a vengeance, and who can say that a President Gore or Bush will be able to overcome it in the future? Internationally, it was always present. But America's need to justify any serious enterprise abroad at the highest moral level, and its need to enlist and enthuse others, is less functional than in the past. Nobody could listen to the Clinton and Blair statements on the bombing of Iraq and not be struck by the necessity which Clinton obviously felt, and Blair obviously did not to the same degree, to dress his declaration in a rhetoric of high morality.

EUROPEANS feel uncomfortable with American crusading. The element of irrationality worries them, even though they see that the crusade is one of the ways in which America is motivated as a nation. Yet they are less than logical themselves. Through years of dependence, Europeans have developed techniques which both use and abuse American leadership. That leadership has traditionally provided them with an excuse to avoid agreement among themselves, since it is smarter politics to proclaim differences and then submit to being rounded up by the Americans. It has also made it possible to avoid the huge spending, the politically impossible spending, that would be required to sustain a genuinely independent foreign and security policy. Finally, it has made it possible to leave Western foreign policy in the rest of the world, with all its costs and risks, largely to America, while individual European countries take advantage from intimating to key parties that they are not entirely in agreement with Washington. The difference in the coming year is that Europe is likely to be more assertive, but without really giving up its dependence on America, a combination which Washington is bound to find irritating. The Germans, for instance, have already started to argue that Nato should adopt a No First Use policy on nuclear weapons, and move faster on nuclear disarmament generally. As it happens, these are admirable proposals. But they could get lost if Nato policy becomes a contentious matter between the Allies. America's ideas for the reform of Nato, which involve Europeans agreeing, in theory, to a worldwide mission to suppress regimes attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction, have had a chilly reception in European capitals.

That mission, of course, has a clear relationship to American and British policy on Iraq. As Saddam Hussein mounts a counter-offensive to break out of sanctions, and perhaps takes provocative action in the Kurdish or Shi'ite areas, Washington will be narrowly watching the behaviour of its allies. America's Arab friends are in the frontline here, but it is easy to see how the policy of France and Russia, and the lukewarm attitude of the Europeans, could be interpreted as giving aid and comfort to the enemy. There is a degree of accepted play acting over Iraq — partly a playing to the gallery of domestic opinion, partly a division of labour — which all the concerned foreign ministries understand. But if America's effort to deal with Saddam should end in a clear failure



Washington is watching the allies narrowly

next year, it would be foolish to imagine that America will not be very angry with those allies it feels, whether rightly or wrongly, have contributed to that failure.

One only has to peer around at the dangers with which Europe and America can only deal with jointly to see how destructive this trend could become. In former Yugoslavia, young Americans and Europeans police a settlement which, for all its flaws, is better than what would have happened if Washington had not finally acted in the Balkans. Now Serbs and Kosovars may be about to start fighting again, facing Europe and the US with difficult decisions about yet another set of bombing raids, those that might be necessary to halt Serbian military movements. Difficult decisions on Russia may not be too far away. The chain reaction of economic disasters around the world has been interrupted rather than ended. Indeed the very symbol of Europe's advance, the euro itself, might need American help in the future, if some of the difficulties that pessimists predict come to pass. The cost of the years that were lost because of Clinton's uninspired presidency is becoming more and more evident. All the more reason, then, to understand that irrationality is evident on both sides of the Atlantic, and that Europe and America needs to play to one another's strengths and not to one another's weaknesses.

Polly Toynbee is away

Our truest Brit

Endpiece

Roy Hattersley

MY local London free sheet, the Westminster Independent, has just named Nelson Mandela "Head of State of the Month", a distinction which would have caused South Africans to dance in the streets with pride had not the picture which accompanied the announcement given the impression that the head of state's head of hair is enhanced by a bright blue rinse. Ever since I saw a van which boasted "Medium-sized Domestic Plumber of 1989" (it was 1992 at the time), I have considered organising an Award of the Year of the Year Award. And at first I was annoyed to think that the coinage of annual pointless accolades had been debased by the cheap metal of meaningless monthly honours. Now I realise that it is far more sensible to nominate the man or woman who has been the hero of the last four weeks than to chose the dominant personality of a full 12 months. The longer the period, the sillier the contest. Sadly, the Today programme is asking us to nominate The Personality of the Millennium.

Being an adult of sound mind, I assumed that the contest was meant to be fun. But when I telephoned the BBC in search of more information, it became clear that the event is being treated with Reithian solemnity. The duty officer connected me to a special Millennium Personality hotline. A lady, with a voice like doom, broke the sad news that I was too late to vote. When I told her that I merely wanted to know if the great name for which Today searched so assiduously was a figure from the last 1,000 or 2,000 years, she said that she was not allowed to speak to the press but would pass me on to a colleague. I still do not know the answer to my question. For the official spokesperson — who sounded as if she normally kept house for Dr Finlay at Tannochbrae — merely said "I am not allowed to enter into conversation" and put the telephone down.

Why is the BBC so coy? I know that the name Peter Mandelson is not allowed to be mentioned on their premises. But surely his chance of becoming Man of the Millennium has faded if not altogether disappeared. These days, my dog and I are on our morning walk when John Humphrys and Co speak to the world. So, thanks to the Broadcasting House thought police, all I know for certain is who the winner should be. Friends of mine have told me, with appropriate incredulity, the names that various celebrities have offered as candidates. Yet I cannot be even sure of them. When I phoned the BBC a second time and asked for confirmation of the candidates nominated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Hague and Lady Antonia Fraser, I was told that the information must remain secret — a strange injunction since the nominations had been made on a live broadcast.

According to my informants, Lady Antonia believes that Oliver Cromwell is the Personality of the Millennium. Her choice must be applauded as a major act of reconciliation since the Lord Protector made a habit of slaughtering priests of the Roman Catholic persuasion, to which his sponsor belongs. Only cynics will suggest that Lady Antonia was influenced by the fact that she has written a biography of God's Englishman.

On the other hand, nobody will be able to explain the leader of the opposition's nomination. If what I hear is true, at the next general election the voters will have to choose between one party leader who thinks that Ivanhoe is the best book in the English language and another who believes that the dominant figure of the last 1,000 (or is it 2,000?) years is Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin. I do not mean to diminish Sir Alexander's achievement. During my sickly childhood, I was regularly treated with his sovereign remedy. But when Hague's advisers told him to name a scientist, why did they forget Isaac Newton?

It was the name that George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, pulled out of his mitre that gave me most concern. I am assured that his lot fell upon his predecessor Thomas Cranmer who, first supported Henry VIII's petition for divorce but then, having helped to establish the Church of England, recanted. Cranmer then changed his mind a second time and went, an unflinching martyr, to the stake. But should not St Augustine have taken precedence? He actually brought Christianity to England.

The only explanation of his exclusion is that he was not born British — although, like Rupert Murdoch, he assumed a new nationality in order to succeed in his profession. It was because of my concern for Augustine's chauvinistic exclusion that I inquired from the BBC of the date on which the contest was based. I also hoped to illustrate the absurdity of the whole operation.

Its nonsense is underlined by the indisputable fact that, if a single human being can be chosen as the greatest figure in British history there is really no doubt about who is The Personality of the Millennium. The name — to adapt a slogan from President Clinton's first election campaign — is absolutely obvious. It's Shakespeare, stupid.

There is really no doubt about which human being is the Personality of the Millennium. The name is obvious

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The **Guardian**
Monday December 28 1998
Edition Number 47370
119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER
Tel No: 0171-278 2332
Fax No: 0171-837 4530
E-mail: letters@guardian.co.uk
Website: http://www.guardian.co.uk

'Misheard song lyrics — I can see Deirdre now Lorraine has gone'
Catherine Merriman, Letters

TV's hard sell to children

Rules are blandly ignored

NO GOVERNMENT as nervous as New Labour about being seen to nanny the nation is going to move against the commercialisation of children. Yet if there is a moment to strike, it is this post-Christmas period. As David Piachaud, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics, has pointed out, the average child on Christmas Day opened presents worth a phenomenal £250. Remember, one-third of all children — almost 4 million — are living in families on or below the European poverty line with an income of less than half the average. The reason so much is spent on toys and games is television advertising and its capacity to promote "pester power". A typical child sees 10,000 of them during 900 hours of TV viewing a year. The Advertising Standards Authority's rules, which insist "appeals to buy must only be made for suitable products which children could reasonably be expected to afford", are blatantly ignored.

Not all governments are nervous about the nanny label. Sweden and Quebec ban all TV ads aimed at children. Britain won't face the issue, even though spending on toys and children's clothes in two-parent, two-child homes has trebled in 30 years.

If families have had no relief from the commercialisation of their children, there have been advances elsewhere. The budget with its £2.50 increase in benefit for the oldest child, its working family tax credit and its generous provision for childcare costs, was the best budget for children for at least two decades. There was also some welcome and much overdue redistribution with the typical family receiving an extra £250 in support, but the poorest fifth (looking after almost 4 million children) gaining an extra £500 on average from next April.

There are other ways poor families will benefit. Sure Start, which will spend £540 million over the next three years, including 250 education schemes, is designed to provide comprehensive support for children under four in seriously disadvantaged areas. New support services like Newpin, Home Start and Parentline, will flourish in these areas, providing help lines, home visitors and family centres. Pilot programmes are growing. The New Deal for Communities has spawned 17, while the Social Exclusion Unit's report on our poorest housing estates has generated 18 task forces to examine cross-departmental issues. Ministers deserve high praise for the improved policy co-ordination.

They should also be praised for being ready to tackle the thorny issue of "family policy". They are not trying to tell people how to live their lives, or impose a single pattern of family life, or even force couples to stay together, but they have rightly recognised that the breakdown of family life has huge public consequences which a responsible government needs to address. A Conservative opposition, which in its first year confessed it had paid too little regard to the three C's (care, concern and compassion) during its term of office, has been too ready to reject compassion this year. It should remember that even a rightwinger like Reagan, recognised the need to help poor families with his endorsement of the American headstart programme.

Serious challenges remain. Inequality has been widening again and will not start to narrow until April's changes are introduced. Even then, although poor families at work will reap much benefit, poor families unable to find work will still suffer. An easy first step would be to abolish the Tory changes to the Social Fund, which Labour lambasted in opposition, and insist all future help involves grants not loans. A more generous benefit index than prices is needed if the unemployed are going to be helped. And Labour backbenchers should maintain their pressure for a Children's Rights Commissioner, and not be bought off with Dobbo's weak alternative: regional children's rights officers.

Byers at the DTI

Mandelson was shaping up well

MOST of the reaction to Peter Mandelson's resignation has focused on the events leading up to it. But spare a thought for the other casualty — the Department of Trade and Industry. Under the Conservatives its influence declined with a succession of ministers some of whom even questioned whether the department should exist at all.

Under Peter Mandelson this was beginning to change, to the surprise of his critics who expected — indeed hoped — he would fall flat on his back. He didn't. He was shaping up to be a decisive minister with a known agenda and instant access to Downing Street, a combination the DTI hadn't experienced in recent memory. In December alone, while fending off accusations about his private life, he kept the Post Office as a public enterprise, forged a workable compromise about union representation in the workplace and unleashed a laissez-faire attitude to business that, unprecedentedly, had both the CBI and the Institute of Directors lamenting his departure.

Mr Mandelson had returned from visits to Silicon Valley with an American rather than European approach to business culture. He said it was all right under New Labour to become "filthy rich" and that to go bankrupt wasn't a sign of ignominy but one of the rites of passage. Suddenly New Labour had an industrial policy that would echo well in the South of England.

He failed to make clear whether any of the new riches would be redistributed to help education, health or the poor. But this is a problem not yet solved either by Labour or America.

The DTI is now facing its own Fresh Start programme with its third secretary of state in less than two years. As during the Conservative years, they have barely arrived before they are moved on. Stephen Byers, the talented Blair loyalist, now takes over, an unknown quantity with an unfamiliar portfolio. We wish him well. Industry is vital for economic regeneration and it has been left in the cold for far too long.

Letters to the Editor

Branson and the year 2000 bug

SO, the ancient 432-acre site of Penn Wood in Buckinghamshire is not to be turned into a golf course (Report, December 23). The Woodland Trust is delighted Mr Prescott has refused this ludicrous planning application. But we lament that we had to go so close to the wire. A great deal of time and money has been spent fighting this application. Planning procedures must be amended so that irreplaceable sites such as Penn Wood, which predates the Domesday Book, do not come so close to destruction again. Let us hope the Secretary of State's commendable decision in support of protecting our heritage heralds progress.
Mike Townsend.
Chief executive,
Woodland Trust.

RENEWING my annual season ticket recently I noticed the process was being recorded manually. It seems Railtrack's ticket machines can issue the tickets, but they don't automatically record tickets that expire in 2000. New software is expected, but thousands of commuters will be renewing their tickets early to delay annual increases. Is this the first instance of the Y2K bug at work?
Craig Jallal.
St Neots, Cambs.

CONGRATULATIONS for not publishing on Boxing Day to avoid bringing us yet more news of Richard Branson.
Chas White.
Stockport.

OF COURSE we were disappointed not to reach London, but it was a great adventure to travel to Crewe.
C M Adelson.
Lancaster

I SEE that the Pope is against capital punishment. Has he discussed the matter with his boss, who believes in the death penalty for all?
Alan Robinson.
Griffydam, Leicestershire.

What a deficient article on misheard song lyrics (What'd he say, December 21). No mention of Sue Lawley (So lonely — Police) or I can see Deirdre now Lorraine has gone (I can see clearly now the rain has gone).
Catherine Merriman.
Abergavenny, Mon.

Now it's Notting Hill Gate

REPORTS of Peter Mandelson's political demise are regrettably premature (Goodbye . . . for now, December 24) His importance to the New Labour project is too great for his gracing of the back benches to be anything more than temporary. Mandelson has spent most of the last decade and a half as a key member of an inner group which has been plotting a cultural revolution in British politics, whose full import most party members are still only dimly aware of. The New Labour tiff which has resulted in his present predicament has changed nothing fundamental.

In this context Ian Aitken 's comment (December 24) that Mandelson and those he represents are clearly aiming at the elimination of Labour's achievements and any hint of an interventionist state is certainly correct. However the project is equally hostile to Liberal progressivism on the Lloyd George model. It is hostile to Keynesianism and state regulation, and any element of collective welfare provision. Only the pure water of Gladstonian laissez-faire can be allowed a political future.
Trevor Fisher.
Secretary, Labour Reform.

I WAS more than a little dumbfounded by the arrogance displayed by John Redwood (A major misjudgement, December 23). Peter Mandelson may or may not be guilty of a breach of standards, but the Conservative Party has no standards. Have they returned the money donated by Asil Nadir? Have they condemned Shirley Porter and called for her to pay the fine confirmed by the Law Lords? The Conservative Party has a free of interest overdraft at their Bank, they receive interest-free loans by individuals usually not revealed and have recently been in receipt of a £1 million contribution from an anonymous donor.
R G Johnson.
Hook, Hampsire.

WILL you be content if Peter Mandelson is found guilty only of enjoying luxuries (and the largesse of successful friends) which most of his Hartlepool constituents cannot? Perhaps the Guardian would have been better to have distanced itself from the bizarre and disingenuous notion that a Labour MP is in some way selling out by not engaging in solidarity through suffering.
Paul Lockwood.
Guernsey.

ONE man lends another a sum of money to buy a house when neither was in a position of influence or power. Now that both men reached power and influence, one of them has to resign because he did not declare the loan which was a private matter between them. This has to be a salutary lesson to anyone who aspires to be active in public life. No matter how squeaky clean you may be, if the press do not like you, any previous action you take in good faith will be used to besmirch your name.
Ken Cosslett.
Emsworth, Hants.

SURELY the most damaging spoint about the departure of a spin doctor is that he resigned only because he got caught. He is not the only person to fill out a mortgage application form, but he must be the only one who cannot remember if he did it accurately, and where he filed the photocopy.
Sue Doughty.
Woodley, Berks.

THANK you Guardian for an excellent Christmas present. There is a Father Christmas.
John Tempest.
Bradford.

THE Prince of Darkness reputedly used to warn opponents "we know where you live". It is deliciously ironic that his career has been scuppered by the Guardian telling us where he lives . . . and how he paid for it.
Mike Bird.
Maryport, Cumbria.

WATERGATE, Irangate, Camillagate, Zippergate, Notting Hill Gate?
Jason Hazeley.
London.

How Iraqi civilians have been hit

GEORGE Robertson believes that none of the munitions that missed their intended destination hit civilian targets in Iraq (Letters, December 24). One in fact even missed the country and landed in Iran. Since the Red Cross returned to Iraq, estimated civilian casualties have risen to 200. Credible reports are that three hospitals in Baghdad were hit, and two in northern cities, as were schools, and homes.

Since communications to the south were destroyed, figures from there are unknown. But what is known is that destruction of the oil refinery at Basra (in contravention of the Geneva convention) has deprived Iraq under the woefully inadequate oil-for-food agreement, and deprived the people of the south of kerosene for heat and cooking. The south of Iraq is a "safe haven".

The Pentagon estimates that 88,500 tons of ordnance was dropped on Iraq, which equals 354,000 Omaghs.
Felicity Arbuthnot.
London.

Neither Mark Steel (War Sucks, 23 December) nor George Robertson mention that almost one-third of the $5.2 billion Iraq could earn from the sale of oil is paid to cover UN expenses. Of course, Iraq's oil industry cannot produce $5.2 billion of oil every six months: oil prices have fallen, and essential spare parts have not been approved by the sanctions committee. The predicted revenue from oil sales for the next six months is $3.3 billion.

If a third of that is paid to the UN, only $2.2 billion will be available for humanitarian assistance. George Robertson is therefore wrong to say that "Saddam is allowed to sell oil to buy as much food and medicine as necessary".
Andrew Harmer.
Wareham, Dorset.

DOES George Robertson really think that if I suspect that my neighbour is building something nasty in his tool shed that I have the right to blow it up without any specific legal authority? And if I kill some of his children in the process does he think that this is not murder?
Bruce Kent.
London.



Nissen hut NHS worked better

POLLY Toynbee does not really distance herself from the many disparaging remarks she repeats about people who campaign for their local hospital, "even if it's a ramshackle group of old Nissen huts, a pre-Boer war fever hospital or a Victorian workhouse". The Victorian workhouse I campaigned for had a two-week waiting list for out-patient clinics. In fact you saw there the same consultants who practised in the bigger specialist units she is so keen on, and who were not the medical staff, "struggling to do operations beyond their capability" she so insultingly describes.

We all may well be misguided in our loyalty and stupid in Polly Toynbee's eyes, but I have the feeling we were better off with a consultant medical opinion after a two-week wait, rather than what is now the six-month norm in Hackney and Tower Hamlets. But then, what would I know, being just one of those locals "who didn't know about medical results"? Kindly adopt a more respectful tone to the mugs who will have to pay for it all.
Myrna Shaw.
London.

Rights watch

WHAT a sad reflection on British society when we read on the same page of your newspaper of 24th December that a sad sick old man of 83 years, who came to this country for medical treatment, is denied the chance to go to church during Christmas to celebrate Catholic mass. At the same time prisoners were being released on parole from the Maze prison for Christmas and New Year.

General Pinochet may have reigned over terror in his country, but undoubtedly he has not the blood on his hands in the same way as some of those paroled. There was not much Christmas spirit when they decided this old man had to abide by the bail conditions which confines him to the home he rents on Surrey's Wentworth Estate. Was he really such a risk that he couldn't have been allowed to attend a Mass?
John Corrie MEP.
(Conservative),
Worcestershire.

SPAIN, Switzerland and France have all signalled their willingness to put General Pinochet on trial for the crimes against humanity of which he is accused. A government as strongly committed to human rights as ours has no excuse for remaining aloof.
Geoffrey Bindman.
London.

YOU correctly called the idea that the Bosnian Muslims were responsible for the bombing of the Sarajevo market in 1994 a "grotesque fiction" (Leader, December 22). This same idea was peddled by virtually an entire Panorama programme of the BBC presented by John Simpson and aided by General Rose.

That General Rose would peddle the MI6 line was (and is) self-evident. What is less clear is whether the BBC and Simpson were unwitting dupes or willing accomplices.
Prof Zahur Zaman.
Amersham,
Bucks.

Passengers should not be afraid of flying over London — yet

YOUR article about air traffic control (Flight or fright, December 23) is timely. As the union which represents pilots who have to fly through this congested airspace, we too have expressed our concern about the ever-increasing pressures on air traffic controllers. The opening of the new centre at Swanwick is vital, but it clearly cannot be done before it is ready and fully tested. Whatever the reasons for the delay, we have to accept it will take as long as it takes — it cannot be rushed and there are no short cuts.

In the meantime, everybody involved in the industry, including the airlines and airport operators, have to accept you cannot keep trying to squeeze more and more into the congested airspace. With present resources, and within present environmental constraints which limit the number of night landings, there is a finite limit and we have probably reached it. Capacity both in the skies and on the ground has to be planned around what can be safely handled on a bad day; not on the good day when there is excellent visibility, no wind, and no delays elsewhere in Europe. Those days are few and far between.

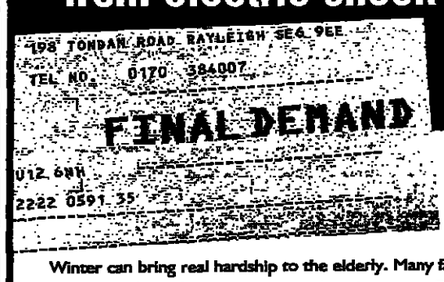
The tone of your article may have given a misleading impression, although you are right to highlight the pressures on the system, and how close it is operating to capacity. Flying over the UK is safe, but must be kept that way.
Mike Sparham.
Assistant general secretary,
Balpa.

THE headline of your report gives an extremely misleading view of air traffic control in Britain. What the article did not tell people was that the number of air traffic controllers has grown faster than the growth in traffic and that an independent report commissioned by the Government recently concluded that the London Area and Terminal Control Centre (LATCC) visited by your reporters is perfectly capable of coping safely with the growing volume of air traffic.

The LATCC system has been repeatedly modernised and is among the most up-to-date in the world — when our new centre at Swanwick opens we will have far and away the most modern system in the world. In fact, UK air traffic control services are the most respected in the world. We are proud of our staff and proud of our record of air safety.
Sir Malcolm Field.
Chairman,
Civil Aviation Authority.

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Expiry Date ____/____
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Helping elderly people stay independent
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Rogues galore

David McKie



BEFORE giving a book as a present, one needs always to look inside it, to make sure there is nothing there that is likely to upset the recipient. I followed this practice this Christmas when buying the fourth Daily Telegraph Book of Obituaries — the theme of this one is rogues — for a cousin. I was also keen to discover what sort of people the Telegraph classed as rogues. Guardian readers? Hunt saboteurs? Those who disparage hereditary peers? Or who hold table knives incorrectly? All these, undoubtedly: but perhaps there might be more . . .

The selection appeared to be generous, going well beyond the range of accredited ne'er-do-wells. Alger Hiss and Spiro Agnew, certainly, and Bernie Cornfeld, and Nicholas Fairbairn — but also the composer John Cage, who can't have been a rogue because wonderful Joanna MacGregor approves of him; and Cyril Ray, a journalist who wrote about wine and once worked for this newspaper; and Bapsy, Marchioness of Winchester, who seems to have devoted large chunks of her life to battles with Ian Fleming's mother. "When Bapsy saw her rival [Eve Fleming] press the Marquess of Winchester's thigh in 1954," the obituary says "she sued for enticement." The left-wing Labour MP Ian Mikardo (of whom Churchill warned: he is not as nice as he looks) is here too, and the Sunday newspaper columnist Sir John Junor, whose thunderous Scottish moralising was combined with what the Telegraph's older readers would probably call a taste for the ladies. "Not so much a lover," his obituarist recalls "as a plunderer of women."

And then, in the midst of this exotic galère, there is Peter Eastwood: not just a Telegraph man, but a Telegraph managing editor, yet here consigned by the newspaper he served for so many years to the status of rogue. The obituary — said to have been written by William Deedes, who served alongside Eastwood when he was the paper's editor — hints at, rather than chronicling, the qualities which propelled him into this book. "Admired, feared, even hated by colleagues," it says, and making them feel "like a prep-school class ruled by the most testing master." But you have to go elsewhere to get the full flavour of Eastwood. The Times obituary, perhaps, which had him as dictatorial, power-seeking, constantly seeking to undermine those whom he thought might rival him; or the Guardian's: "He terrorised his sub-editors, however senior." Or Deedes's autobiography, where the prep-school master becomes a company sergeant major, hectoring and bullying, though always in the defence of rigorous standards.

The Telegraph, traditionally, had an editor who looked after the leaders, the political features and so on, and a second, with a title like managing editor, who superintended the news. But where did one sphere of influence end and the other begin? One would hear hair-raising tales from Telegraph colleagues of battles for control of the parliamentary sketch, once part of the editor's fiefdom, but coveted by Eastwood on the grounds that the sketch appeared on a news page, and he was i.c. news. Deedes recalls in his memoirs how Eastwood killed one sketch, by Frank Johnson, because he thought it "unhelpful" to Margaret Thatcher. Deedes was powerless to override him, but rescued the piece and printed it on the leader page, where he was king. Once, a Telegraph man told me, he and some of his colleagues suggested to Deedes that the Guardian's Simon Hoggart was much the best man, when somebody left, to take over the sketch. Sorry, the editor said, nothing doing: he gathered the slot had already been filled.

Not much of this would have been apparent to readers. They may have noted the paper's iron disciplines (eg each paragraph in a story should ideally consist of two sentences, each of 25 words) without knowing just what — and just who — made the disciplines stick. But some others of Eastwood's foibles were apparent to close students of his newspaper. He shamelessly wangled into his news columns stories — often entirely trivial — about Burnham-on-Crouch, where he lived, extending this interest from time to time as far as neighbouring townships like South Woodham Ferrers. Not even the Burnham Bugle could have been more devoted in chronicling events at the Burnham Yacht Club. Trains running late from Burnham-on-Crouch to their London terminus were ruthlessly exposed in the Telegraph's columns.

When Eastwood at last retired I wrote to the Daily Telegraph, regretting the great man's departure and hoping this would not lead to a diminution of the flow of stories about Burnham. For some reason, I received no reply.

Cathal Goulding

The IRA's lost new direction

CATHAL GOULDING, who has died aged 75, was chief of staff of the Irish Republican Army at the end of the 1960s, during the outbreak of the present phase of the Troubles. He was therefore in a key position during a pivotal period in modern Irish history. The republican movement he led saw itself as the embodiment over generations of the aspiration for Irish unity and independence. It was striving to get to grips with a tumultuous and rapidly-changing situation — one which Goulding and his allies had never expected to arise. If the political project which he tried to carry through in that period ended in failure, it was not out of personal weakness or lack of will on his part, but because of the inadequacy of his republican ideas.

Recalling his own career as an IRA activist in the days when "the struggle" was its own validation and its objective a shimmering abstraction, he once remarked that, "We didn't go out to free Ireland, we went out to fight to free Ireland". He wanted to be done with that sort of careless, lethal romanticism, and to make a practical reality of revolution in Ireland.

Goulding had become chief of staff at an IRA army convention in 1962, taking over from acting chief of staff Ruairi O Bradaigh just months after the 1956-62 border campaign had ended with an order to dump arms, which was couched in the usual, grandiose terms of defiance but came across in the circumstances as a petulant whimper. By his own account, Goulding got the job because nobody else wanted it, so shrunken and demoralised had the movement become.

His personal credentials were impeccable. Goulding had been an "IRA man" since 1937, when he was an 11-year-old schoolboy, having joined Fianna Eireann, the IRA's junior wing, in the working-class area he came from on the north side of Dublin. His boyhood friend, Brendan Behan, joined at around the same time. His grandfather had been an "invincible", from the group which had famously assassinated the two most senior British officials in Ireland in 1892. His father had been an IRA soldier in the 1919-21 Irish war of independence and had taken the anti-treaty side in the subsequent split. His parents dressed themselves in the uniforms of the socialist James Connolly's Citizens' Army for their wedding.

Like many thousands of anti-treatyites in the new Irish Free State, the Gouldings found it difficult to make a living, and it came naturally to Cathal, self-employed as a house-painter, to associate his "inherited" republicanism with the idea of social revolt. The association was assumed, there being no felt need for a programmatic link. Another friend, Tomas MacGiolla, later president of Sinn Fein, has described Dublin republicans in the early 1950s watching trains arriving from the west, jam-packed with emigrants en-route for the Holyhead boat, and pressing on them leaflets which urged them to believe that the British presence in the North was the source of all their ills.

In 1956 Goulding was arrested on an arms raid in England and jailed for six years. He was later to say that prison had protected him from the debilitation which afflicted many who had soldiered through the same years on the outside. He still had the heart to take over as chief of staff on his release, and had acquired an understanding that there was no future for the movement if it did not connect with the consciousness of the flesh-and-blood people in whose name it presumed to wage war. Goulding and the group around him — some of them fellow ex-prisoners, others former members of the Communist Party — launched the "New Departure".

The new leaders did not lack for commitment, and speedily discarded the gaudy accoutrements of nationalist romance, but they never managed to break from the rigidity and elitism of the republican tradition. They rather substituted for it, unthinkingly in many instances, a different class of arrogance, clandestinity and subterfuge. The ideology underpinning the New Departure was standard-issue Stalinism. The fact that this was not spelled out in public, or even to the rank and file of the movement itself, didn't trouble Goulding. It wasn't that he was personally dishonest — although close friends say he could take a mischievous delight in his own deviousness; it was more that the Stalinist way of going about things did not strike a disciplined member of the republican movement, with its secret army calling the shots for political front-people, as particularly outrageous.

Goulding co-wrote documents put to an army convention in 1965 which defined the IRA's objective as "a democratic socialist republic" and directed members into grass-roots political action, such as fish-ins and housing action campaigns in the South and the generation of a civil rights movement in the North. He was present at the closed meeting in Maghera, Co Derry, in 1966, at which the key decision was made to set up the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.

However, the strategy was damaged beyond repair at the end of the 1960s by the great whoosh of nationalist rage that followed armed Royal Ulster Constabulary and loyalist attacks on Catholic working-class areas — the northern state's response to the civil rights demands. Between 1970 and 1972 Goulding had no option but to tack back towards nationalism and to sanction military action against the British and the RUC, as his "Official" IRA tried to head off the development of the breakaway Provisionals. But it was not in the framework of his politics to admit that the perspectives of the New Departure — which had led to the abandonment of "Brits Out" on the very eve of its re-acceptance as a rallying-call by the nationalist masses — had been shown to be wrong.

The Officials, still sporadically involved in violence despite a ceasefire called by Goulding in May 1972, set an unsteady course which was to carry them ideologically close to the unionist camp without enabling them to expand organisationally beyond bases in Catholic working-class areas.

In his own mind Goulding never deserted the republicanism he had been part of, literally since he had been in short trousers. Never, even momentarily, did he contemplate leaving the movement to express his political ideas through an alternative. All his efforts were bent towards shifting the movement itself over, sufficiently intact. After an extremely heated exchange with a group of Northerners in the 1970s (one of many) he departed saying, in effect, "You can argue anything you like, but remember — outside this movement there is no salvation".

Seen thus, the republican movement could contain the Stalinoid ideas of the New Departure just as well as the nationalist notions of traditional republicanism. The mould of the movement had not been dented, much less discarded, but merely filled with a different dogmatism.

Only in that defining early period of the Troubles was Goulding at the very centre of events. But the same sense of certainty, and the same indomitable persistency, sustained him through the years afterwards, through further twists and turns and policy flip-flops, as the Officials fought murderous feuds in the North in futile manoeuvres to stave off irrelevance, while gradually adepting to bourgeois realities in the South.

In 1992 Goulding and most of those from the New Departure who were still around stood firm by what they continued to identify as "the movement — now designated the Workers' Party — when a parliamentary filo-faction took the road to coalition with the button-down blueshirts of new-model Fine Gael.

Like republicanism itself, Goulding was both impossible to vanquish and incapable of victory. If he was embittered towards the end by the bleakness which surrounded him politically, he might well have been warmed by memories of a chaotically rich personal life. Strangely enough for a man who seemed not just to evince but to embody his politics, "he never brought his political ideas home", according to one member of a warm and loving family, which extended in a number of directions.

Strangely too, in a country where political feuds can be literally murderous, and personal exchanges conducted with poisonous passion — and Cathal Goulding himself was experienced in such things — there are many who had no time at all for his politics who will nevertheless concede that he was a most impressive man to encounter directly, and who will recall him with a sad warmth for the way things might have been in different, more rational days.

Eamonn McCann

Cathal Goulding, Irish republican, born 1922; died December 26, 1999



Grave words ... Goulding gives the oration at the funeral of his fellow republican Joe McCann in Belfast in April 1972

John Pulman

Nights on the green beige table

John Pulman, who has died aged 75, was world champion in snooker's darkest days from 1957-1968. Once, after an master of ceremonies had cried "He wasn't world champion for a lot of years for nothing," Pulman reposted feelingly: "Next to nothing."

English amateur champion as an unknown from Exeter in 1946, he lived at the house, with billiard room attached, of his wealthy patron Bill Lampard, who launched him into a professional game which, in those immediate post-war years, was a coterie over which Joe Davis presided at the Leicester Square Hall, which had 220 seats. There were no fortunes to be made from the 20 per cent share of the gate to which Pulman soon became entitled as a leading player. Davis took 30 per cent and also owned one third of the business.

A share of the gate was more worth having for any world championship finalist since in those days the final was of never less than a week's duration — and sometimes only the best of 145 frames spread over a fortnight at the cavernous Blackpool Tower Circus.

Pulman lost the 1955 and 1956 finals to Davis but the advent of television was helping to kill snooker as a public entertainment just as the introduction of colour 20 years later was to transform its financial structure. So little money was on offer for the 1957 tournament in Jersey that Davis was not among the four entrants. Pulman won the title but promoters took so dim a view of snooker's commercial potential that the championship went into abeyance for seven years.

After its revival on a challenge basis, Pulman made five successful title defences, but when it was restored to a knockout format in 1969 he was ring rusty in comparison with new, match-hard talents from the amateur ranks like John Spencer, Ray Reardon and Alex Higgins, whose snooker brain, he said recently, "was the quickest I ever saw."

So dark had been snooker's years of depression that only a handful survived by slogging round the club and holiday camp exhibition circuit. "You need a map from the AA to play on this," Pulman would exclaim of one poor table after another. One club was so riled by his remarks that it filed an official complaint, stating "There couldn't have been anything wrong with the table because all our players beat him."

Having driven through atrocious winter weather he arrived at one village institute, carrying his cue case and wearing a tuxedo, to be met with the question: "Are you the snooker player?" No, he wasn't, he replied, selecting a popular four-letter word, he was the chimney sweep. Of one cheap hotel he remarked: "If you aren't in by midnight the bedbugs come looking for you." This sort of routine – with long days to kill and many a beast of a table to be tamed – did his game no good. Convivial to a fault, he habitually drank long and late, even after snooker's tournament scene revived.

Although his standard had deteriorated, he nevertheless reached the 1970 world final, losing to Joe Reardon. Three months abstinence and some solid practice, brought his game into good shape for the 1977 championship, the first to be staged at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield. He reached the semi-finals but from there his playing career went downhill. Finally, crossing the road in front of a bus, it caught and broke his trailing leg.

He never played again but, divorced after a 25-year marriage and bankrupt, he worked as a television commentator, a role to which he brought a mellifluous voice and a life-long articulacy.

He did produce one memorable quip during a tournament sponsored by Yamaha Organs at which one of the sponsor's products was the prize for the highest break. As someone was clearing the last few colours, Pulman's co-commentator, Dennis Taylor, remarked that it was possible for him to equal the highest break. "That may be so Dennis," replied Pulman, "but what can you do with half an organ?"

Clive Everton

Herbert John Pulman, snooker player, born December 12, 1923; died December 25, 1998



Pulman ... from a life of playing snooker he moved on to discussing it on television

'Flip' Wilson

Humour black and blue

It is a sad comment on the pioneering career of the black American comedian Flip Wilson, who has died aged 64 of complications following a liver tumour operation, that in the last third of his life his name only ever appeared in trivia quiz questions.

This decline into obscurity stemmed in part from his own decision, quite literally, to spend more time with his family. But it also reflected America's continuing ambiguity towards black citizens who manage to haul themselves into prominence.

There were few indications in Clerow Wilson's early life that he might pierce his nation's racial barriers to star in one of its top-rated television shows. Nothing is known of his parents except that, at the height of the Depression, they were among the poorest of Jersey City's poor, that they could not cope with their baby, and that, as a result, he was farmed out to a series of foster homes.

At 21 Wilson took up one of the few callings likely to offer a reasonable prospect of advancement, the United States Air Force. President Truman had imposed equality on the armed services a few years earlier and the Supreme Court had just embarked on its fundamental rulings against segregation which eventually cleared away the barriers of legal discrimination against black Americans.

The young recruit soon became extremely popular with his comrades when he developed a comic routine for their off-duty entertainment. His irreverent attitudes earned him the nickname "Flip" and his success in the barrack room sparked a wider show-business ambition. He left the USAF after four years for a series of odd jobs while he polished up his act in small clubs.

Wilson's breakthrough came in 1965 when he was invited to appear on *The Johnny Carson Show*, then America's most influential television showcase. He was



Wilson ... top ratings

an immediate hit and was soon making cameo appearances in other high-ranking variety shows like *The Rowan and Martin Laugh-In*. After three increasingly successful years on this circuit a star billing in a television variety show persuaded NBC to offer him his own prime-time comedy series.

Unlike his fellow comic, Bill Cosby, Wilson never tried to distract his audience from the colour of his skin. The sharply observed characters he created sprang straight from the black urban culture in which he had been raised. Though *The Flip Wilson Show* featured such important guests as Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, John Wayne, and Dean Martin, it remained essentially a one-man performance.

Wilson peopled it with the sort of characters Tom Wolfe later used so successfully for his novels. A real-life version of the flamboyant homilies of the Rev Leroy, high-powered pastor of the Church Of What's Happening Now, could be heard almost any Sunday in a thousand black neighbourhoods.

Geraldine, Wilson's bewigged, mini-skirted and high-heeled sexual predator, could equally be found on almost any street corner among the clustered soul sisters of urban America. Her leering catchphrase, "What you see is what you get", became the theme of a popular song in 1971 and, a decade later (by then reduced to WYSIWYG), it was used as a street-wise description of the Apple computer operating system.

The success of this line, however, did Wilson a disservice: he spent his show-business career avoiding the crude sexual innuendo of later performers. The "safe" nature of his show, which went out at the family viewing hour of 8pm on Thursdays, sent its ratings soaring to second position among all America's television programmes and brought Wilson Emmy awards for both scripts and performance. More unusually, his deal with NBC allowed the show to be produced by his own company, reaping a far higher share of the income. But, just as he had achieved this splendid example for other ambitious blacks, the whole thing went sour.

In 1974 NBC pulled the plug, possibly because of changing public tastes. Wilson said later that he had found the pressures too great and had made a positive decision after his divorce to devote more of his life to his five children. He subsequently refused to perform for more than 20 weeks a year, mainly at nightclubs, and, though there were a couple of attempts to revive his television career, they were unsuccessful.

After that he simply disappeared from view, though some of his old shows have been running on America's cable channels. His private life became increasingly troubled by legal actions from former lovers demanding financial support and by an arrest on drug charges, which was later ruled illegal by a California court. He died after unsuccessful surgery for a liver tumour.

Harold Jackson

Clerow 'Flip' Wilson, comedian, born December 8, 1933; died November 25, 1998

A Country Diary

THORPE HAMLET, NORFOLK: I went out first thing and there it was in the gutter just outside the door. It eyed me instantly and with its usual quick-silver reactions it was off, giving a machine-gun chatter as it flew. It was a magpie – the first I have seen seen in our road, although their encroachment upon Norwich has been a steady process in the last few years.

And it is now official: we can embrace this advance as a positive development and discard the bird's old image as a devouring monster, responsible for the collapse in songbird populations that has become so widely publicised. A recent paper in the *Proceedings Of The Royal Society Of London* describes research into the impact of both magpies and sparrowhawks on small birds. The authors examined figures concerning 23 songbird populations and looked to see if there was any correlation between these and magpie and sparrowhawk numbers. The paper concludes that there is no link. In some places songbirds increased alongside the two predators, while in others they declined despite the fact that sparrowhawks and magpies remained constant. This may go some way to rehabilitate the sparrowhawk, but I doubt whether the evidence will alter one jot public attitudes towards its presumed partner in crime. The magot pie or chatternag is too deeply embedded in our cultural life as a symbol of bad or, at least, ambiguous luck for it ever to be embraced. It will remain one of only 13 birds that it is legal to kill as vermin. People will still see magpies in spring hauling defenceless songbird chicks from their nests and put two and two together and make five.

Our hatred of the magpie is proof that birds are more than just the objects of scientific research. They are creatures of our unreason, freighted with rich and strange mythologies. In some ways I hope they will long continue to be so.

MARK COCKER

Mark Graham

A voice for Thailand's wildlife

THE conservationist and writer Mark Graham, who died in the southern Thailand plane crash two weeks ago aged 58, fought to preserve that country's forest, fauna and wildlife which had been savaged in its dash for economic development.

Graham's soldier father made his life in Malaya. Mark, who was born in Singapore, escaped with his mother from the Japanese invasion and arrived in Britain in 1943. Educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh, he joined the Seaforth Highlanders, who took him back to what what is now Malaysia during its confrontation with Indonesia.

He then studied art at the British Institute in Florence, and worked in advertising before leaving for Thailand and marriage in 1968. He worked for a pharmaceutical company, while trekking in Thailand and Nepal.

Once retired from business, these interests launched him as an author. His first book, *National Parks Of Thailand* led to *Thailand's Vanishing Flora And Fauna*, co-written with the highly-regarded ornithologist Philip Round and illustrated largely by Graham's photographs. It provided, in a popular format, a hard-hitting analysis of the dire state of Thailand's wildlife. Other books followed, notably a history of wood, which exposed the gaping hole being knocked in Thai culture by the devastation of its forests.

Graham exploited extensive business contacts to raise funds for conservation projects, supporting research into forest regeneration by a unit of Northern Chiang Mai University. His enthusiasm for tigers led to a project in southern Thailand exploiting advanced infra-red technology to photograph them.

Such causes also found a platform in a newspaper column he wrote under the pseudonym Nong Nguak (hornbill), where he could voice his deep disillusion with the performance of the government's royal forest department in protecting Thailand's conservation areas as well as the "depradations of rapacious nouveau riche urbanites, bureaucrats and politicians." His vehemence was a less often seen complement to the wry, irreverent wit and languid charm that earned Mark affection and respect among many Thais.

Graham is survived by his son Jamie, 24, and daughter Fiona, 26.

Nick Cumming Bruce

Mark Graham, conservationist, born March 1, 1941; died December 12, 1998

Birthdays

Air Commodore Molly Allott, former director, WRAF, 80; **Intikhab Alam**, former Pakistan cricket manager, 57; **Terry Butcher**, footballer, 40; **Donald Carr**, cricket umpire, 72; **Sandra Faber**, American astronaut, 54; **Max Hastings**, editor, London Evening Standard, 53; **Lord (Roy) Hattersley**, writer and journalist, former deputy leader, the Labour Party, 68; **Noel Johnson**, actor, 82; **Nigel Kennedy**, violinist, 42; **Frances Morrell**, former leader, Ilea, 61; **Hildegarde Neff**, actress, singer and writer, 73; **Bridget Prentice**, Labour MP, 46; **Simon Raven**, author, playwright, 71; **Joan Ruddock**, Labour MP, 55; **Dame Maggie Smith**, actress, 64; **Richard Sudhalter**, writer, jazz musician, 60; **The Rt Rev Bill Westwood**, broadcaster and former Bishop of Peterborough, 73.

Death Notices

MARRINER. Margaret Mary née Power (Peg), suddenly after a brief illness on 22nd December, 1998, aged 86 years. Fond and beloved wife, mother and grandmother. Requiem Mass at Church of Our Lady, Lisson Grove NW8 on Thursday 31st December at 12.30pm followed by cremation at Golders Green Crematorium, 2pm. No flowers by request. Donations, if desired, to Imperial Cancer Research Fund, c/o R. F. Sherry & Son Funeral Directors, 25 Bell Street NW1 5BY, tel 0171 723 0425.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4707 between 9am and 9pm Mon-Fri.

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The long goodbye, page 12

Tomorrow: The risk business

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239 9610
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FinanceGuardian

CBI fears impact of euro on sterling ❑ Union warns of price to be paid in jobs

Rates threat to industry

Mark Atkinson and Nicholas Watt

BUSINESS and union leaders yesterday voiced fears that Britain could be saddled with higher interest rates and unemployment if the UK stays outside the European single currency.

With the euro expected to ly establish itself quickly as a major world currency, many economists believe it will surge upwards against both the Amerian dollar and Japanese yen when it makes its trading debut next month.

Adair Turner, the director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, said a strong euro was unlikely to damage the euro-bloc's competitiveness because 90 per cent of its trade was internal.

However, there is a danger that sterling might be dragged down by a fall in the dollar, with which it has moved in tandem for the last eight years. While a weaker pound would help exporters, it might put a higher floor under UK interest rates, he said.

"The pound might have a year of relative stability, but we might have a sudden and significant move downwards which will make the Bank worry about inflation and be reluctant to cut interest rates. All that we can say is that we will be in a very uncertain position," said Mr Turner.



'You need to have right policy levers, not grandiose, meaningless pacts for jobs'

Adair Turner, CBI director-general

Meanwhile, one of the country's largest unions warned that up to a million jobs could be lost if Britain stays outside the single currency zone.

In an attempt to increase pressure on Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, to set a date for British membership, the AEEU says that many inward investors will be forced to move their production bases to the Continent unless the Government acts soon.

Ken Jackson, the general secretary of the AEEU, said that inward investors, who have created 750,000 jobs in Britain, are worried that ambivalence about the euro may jeopardise their access to European markets.

"The price of staying outside the euro is too high to pay," said Mr Jackson. "Inward investors may move overseas if the UK tiptoes around EMU.

"With over half of all our exports going to Europe, British jobs will be at risk until we join."

Mr Turner said the UK could avoid sliding into recession but the outcome would depend on the monetary policy committee, which has already cut interest rates three times since October, reducing the cost of borrowing aggressively from the current level of 6.25 per cent.

"Five per cent by Easter — we would encourage the Bank of England to have that sort of mindset," said Mr Turner.

On balance in favour of UK membership of the euro zone, Mr Turner said Britain would suffer a loss of political influence from not joining — its voice in debates on tax harmonisation and social policy would be weakened.

UK exporters might also find themselves at a competitive disadvantage to European counterparts who would no longer have an exchange rate risk to impede them.

However, Mr Turner cautioned that the launch of the single currency would not be all plain sailing.

While greater price transparency would encourage businesses to improve their productivity and efficiency, it might simply result in higher unemployment if it was not accompanied by increased labour market flexibility.

"You need to have the right policy levers, not grandiose, meaningless pacts for jobs," said Mr Turner.

Germany stirs up row with plans for fiscal harmony

THE German government reawakened tensions between Britain and its EU partners over taxes yesterday, announcing it would use its EU presidency to push plans for harmonising fiscal policy, *writes Charlotte Denny.*

Germany, which takes over the rotating presidency next week, has among the highest corporate and income tax rates in Europe and is also the biggest net contributor to Brussels' coffers.

Finance minister Oskar Lafontaine told a German newspaper that Bonn would not continue to be the EU's paymaster unless there was a breakthrough on tax harmonisation.

"One thing is clear," Mr Lafontaine told Welt am Sonntag newspaper. "There is no way that Europe can expect Germany to pay the highest net contribution but at the same time does nothing against the unfair tax competition. That is incompatible with solidarity."

Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has complained that Bonn's contribution of 60 per cent of the EU's budget or DM22 billion ($13 billion), is unfairly high.

Mr Lafontaine's remarks were the first public suggestion Germany may link its financial support to the EU with the stalled efforts to coordinate taxes. It was also another hint that the German presidency may be marked by hardball tactics.

Chancellor Gordon Brown made it clear earlier this month that Britain was prepared to use its veto to stall attempts to set uniform rates of corporate or indirect taxes across the union.

Mr Lafontaine said the EU Commission had made two concrete proposals towards tax harmonisation. "Dismantling tax oases and taxing interest income at the same level," he said.

Germany wants an EU-wide withholding tax on savings that countries such as Britain and Luxembourg oppose.

American Notebook

Never mind the impeachment



Mark Tran

THESE should be triumphalist times for America. In foreign policy, Bill "Lone Ranger" Clinton and "Tonto" Tony Blair rain cruise missiles on Iraq, and there is little that Iraq's friends can do. China, France and Russia can bleat all they want, but they cannot prevent America from going its own way.

At home, a dynamic economy buoyed by a lenient Federal Reserve and consumers' willingness to splurge are helping to stave off global recession — in fact the economy is showing surprising resilience for a seven-year-old expansion. Living standards have reached record levels. Unemployment, inflation and interest rates fell to levels that have not been seen in a generation. The federal budget showed a surplus for the first time in 30 years and Wall Street is edging towards a record-busting high after the summer scare.

But impeachment and the President's trial in the Senate have robbed America of any sense of exaltation at being the world's supreme power. Yet the United States retains its pivotal role, despite Mr Clinton's sea of troubles — and despite the best efforts of commentators to fill the occasion with a sense of history, Wall Street and America beyond the beltway have shrugged off the news.

If Clinton's credibility has suffered, the Republicans' has *plummeted*, with the party losing two House speakers in rapid order. Even when he is down, Clinton enjoys unusually good luck in his enemies, from special prosecutor Kenneth Starr to those southern far-right Republicans who bayed for his resignation in the impeachment debate.

The return of the Dow Jones Industrial average to the 9300 level is evidence of the fundamental irrelevance of impeachment for most Americans. But as long as he can steer the ship of state and can shut out the white noise of impeachment, Clinton still enjoys broad popular support.

WHEN it was needed he showed leadership to calm the markets. Prompted by him, the International Monetary Fund came up with pre-crisis financing. His warnings of the gravest international economic crisis since the second world war set the stage for co-ordinated rate cuts. Perhaps Clinton is one of those rare beings who thrives under pressure, and one wonders what initiatives he would have dreamed up without the distractions of impeachment.

As it approaches a new year, the world should be less worried about the shadow-boxing in Washington than by the health of the US economy, and whether it will continue as the engine for world growth. The current expansion began in March 1991 and, if it lasts beyond next year, will be the longest in US history. It is an article of faith on Wall Street that the American economy will slow next year.

The consensus among economists surveyed by the journal Business Week put growth for 1999 at 1.9 per cent. Weaker growth after the robust expansion of the last two years would be healthy, as an overheated economy would serve nobody's purposes. As always, there are factors that could tip anemic growth into recession. Manufacturing remains weak, dragged down by the Asian economic crisis. Lockheed Martin last week became the latest in a line of blue-chip companies from Boeing to Coca-Cola to issue profit warnings for next year.

USUALLY, a slump in the manufacturing sector will drag down the rest of the economy. Goldman Sachs's economists note only four instances during which the overall economy has escaped a recession while the manufacturing sector was ailing. Against that, manufacturing plays a much more modest role in the US economy than before, currently accounting for 15 per cent of jobs and 17 per cent of output — about half the level of four decades ago.

A weak dollar poses another serious threat to the economy. Some Japanese institutions are planning to increase their European assets in relation to dollar assets in anticipation of the euro. Their mix at present is 70 per cent in dollars and 30 per cent in European currencies. With the euro, the mix could be a 50:50 split, thus putting long-term pressure on the dollar.

More immediate dollar pressure comes from the ballooning deficit in America's commercial dealings with the rest of the world. The current account deficit may hit 4 per cent of output next year; anything over 3 per cent spells trouble for an industrialised country — including growing protectionist sentiment.

Any precipitous weakening of the greenback could undermine stock and bond markets as foreign investors lose their appetites for US assets. By dumping dollar assets, they could prick the stock market bubble — one of the main reasons behind the consumer spending binge. A significant weakening of the dollar would also lessen the Fed's room for manoeuvre in cutting interest rates, as that would create increased dollar pressure.

Brazil could provide the next market shock. Despite an IMF package it is heading for a devaluation — which could in turn trigger devaluation in China. With challenges like these, a Senate trial is the least of Clinton's worries.

Rescued hedge fund partners could get $50m

Mark Tran in New York

SHOULD the partners of Long-Term Capital Management, the hedge fund which almost collapsed three months ago, collect hefty fees now that the fund is making money again?

This is the question facing the consortium of 14 banks and brokerage houses that rescued the hedge fund run by John Meriwether and the Nobel laureates Myron Scholes and Robert Merton. Mr Meriwether and his partners stand to collect as much as $50 million (£29.75 million) in "performance fees" at the end of the year. The pay-out will come from the profits made in the fund by the consortium and the size will depend on the fund's value at the end of the year.

As of the end of November, the $3,625 billion (£2,158 billion) invested by the bail-out banks and securities houses in late September had increased in value by about $400 million and the markets in which LTCM is active have been relatively stable this month.

It marks a dramatic change from the situation a few months ago, when the Federal Reserve intervened to orchestrate a rescue of LTCM on the grounds that its collapse would send shockwaves through the global markets.

Such a pay-out to Mr Meriwether and his partners could spark a furore among critics who thought that LTCM should have been allowed to go under. Some congress members are also bound to wonder whether a group that nearly precipitated a crisis of the international financial system should be so handsomely rewarded.

The consortium, which includes Merrill Lynch, Goldman Sachs and the Salomon Smith Barney unit of Citigroup, may be reluctant to see huge sums paid to the lead partners.

Any pay-out to the partners would have to be approved by the consortium and a separate oversight committee composed of five bank representatives. The rescue package stipulates that the partnership running LCTM is entitled to 15 per cent of all profits of the new money after the fund generates a certain return. Although that formula is lower than the 25 per cent share of profits, the LCTM partners used to get, unless the fund falls in value by the end of December, it will still amount to roughly $50 million under the rescue agreement.

Big chill in California



Icicles cling to lemon trees in Santa Paula, California, last Wednesday morning. Agriculture officials say another night of sub-zero temperatures could destroy the state's half-billion dollar crop PHOTOGRAPH: VICTORIA AROCHO

Orange and lemon crop wiped out in the Golden State

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

California citrus farmers were trying to rescue the last of their fruit yesterday as a week of unusual freezing weather inflicted $600 million of damage, wiping out a quarter of the lemon crop and more than half the oranges.

Thousands of migrant workers from Mexico who depend on the annual winter harvest are now without work, and many farmers have lost their fruit. Although farmers in Florida and Texas escaped the freeze, losses in California, where some citrus is exported to Britain and Europe, will cause higher prices as wholesalers have doubled or tripled prices.

The Golden State's $1.5 billion crop produces 90 per cent of America's lemons, and 80 per cent of oranges eaten as fruit. Florida's crop is also likely to be down from 244 million boxes last year to 190 this year because of earlier cold weather.

In California's central valley, where most of the crop is grown, winter temperatures do not often dip more than a couple of degrees below freezing. But last week the thermometers plunged to around 20 Farenheit, causing the juice to turn to ice, pop the skin and ruin the fruit.

Hundreds of farmers spent a sleepless week carting giant propellers powered by diesel generators to their orchards in the hope that the wind they created would blow away the frost. But efforts were overwhelmed by the worst freeze since 1990 when the state lost $800 million worth of citrus.

Harvey Bailey, a grower with 4,000 acres in the valley, reported that 90 per cent of his crop had been ruined just as he was preparing to harvest. He stayed up all night in vain on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day but determined to carry on. "I might save a bit," he sighed.

If some of the fruit is saved before it decays, oranges can be processed to add colour to Florida's juice production, and the rinds may be ground up for use in fragrances. But growers would receive only a few pennies on the pound instead of the normal $1-$2.

Yesterday California was warmer and the forecast was fair for the next few days.

Japan accepts blame for crisis

Tom McGhie

IN A STRIKING admission of error, the Japanese government released a report yesterday blaming official inaction and delay during the past decade for triggering the country's deepest recession since the second world war.

The year-end report, produced by the state Economic Planning Agency, details government and private firms' failure to come to grips quickly with the collapse of the speculative "bubble" economy of the 1980s.

The troubles left over from the bubble — when real estate and stock markets soared to dizzying heights only to crash during the early 1990s — have plagued the Japanese economy "more than expected", the EPA said.

The collapse in asset prices left behind a massive debt problem that has hobbled Japan's financial system. But instead of moving quickly to resolve the bad loans, government and bank officials decided to "leave the embarrassing problem untouched" and hope for a recovery in prices, the report said.

That recovery never came. Instead, the burst of the bubble brought a combined capital loss of 840 trillion yen ($7.2 trillion) between 1990 and 1996 to businesses and households — about 1.7 times the nation's gross domestic production during 1996.

The capital loss pulled down Japan's GDP growth-rate by an average of around two percentage points each year in the period between 1991 and 1995. The negative effect on the GDP growth-rate diminished to about 0.8 points per year from 1994 to 1996, the EPA said.

The losses strangled consumption and triggered Japan's worst recession since the end of the second world war. The economy shrank for the first time in two decades last year, and unemployment in November was at a record high of 4.4 per cent.

"The slow handling of the bad loans problem has caused various serious problems," a summary of the report said — including the credit crunch that still troubles many private companies.

The EPA pointed to several reasons for the failure to take rapid action: optimism that prices would recover; uniform delay by banks dealing with bad loans; a lack of a system for bad-loan disposal; and a lack of transparency in the financial system as a whole.

In order to overcome the current economic slump, the EPA said Japan must purge itself of the "aftermath of bubble economy".

News in brief

BAe in £100m deal with RAF

British Aerospace has won a £100 million contract to supply 80 replacement fuselages for the Royal Air Force's Hawk T.Mk1/1A aircraft.

BAe will act as prime contractor and be responsible for the design, development and manufacture of the new fuselages.

As a sub-contractor to BAe, RAF St Athan will disassemble the aircraft and return the fuselages to BAe for incorporation of the new structure.

RAF St Athan will carry out reassembly, with delivery to the RAF expected to begin in 2000.

The Hawk entered service in 1976. It is used for training and is also flown by the Red Arrows aerobatic team in their displays.

Engineers buoyant

Engineering companies fared better than other types of manufacturing with output up by 3.4 per cent for the first ten months of the year, according to a report published by the Institute for Manufacturing.

The report calculates that manufacturing as a whole managed to push output up by just 0.4 per cent over that period.

But the Institute also warns that the strong pound is likely to depress exports, which are especially important to engineering and chemical firms.

Daimler cheer

DaimlerChrysler AG reported a significant rise in 1998 earnings and said next year's results would show the benefits of the $42 billion merger which formed the world's fifth-largest car manufacturer in November this year.

The group said initial estimates showed revenues rose by 13 per cent to DM260 billion in 1998 compared with pro-forma combined figures for the former Daimler-Benz and Chrysler operations.

"The coming year is expected to show the first positive effects of the merger," said the DaimlerChrysler chairmen Juergen Schrempp and Robert Eaton.

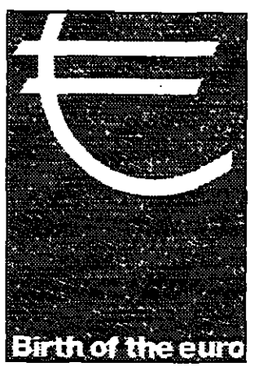
Murdoch on ball

Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation is poised to buy as much as 80 per cent of the Italian pay-television company Stream for $118.8 million. Telecom Italia, the parent company, is also reported to be preparing to bid with News Corp for the rights to broadcast Italian soccer.

The deal could see News Corp and Telecom Italia compete head-on for soccer rights against Telepiu, the pay-TV company which is owned by French media group Canal Plus and the state broadcaster RAI.

The single currency

'The British people have been kept in the dark, while those who speak the truth are denounced as scaremongers'
Sir Stanley Kalms



For the first time in 70 years, the US currency has an equal competitor. **Martin Walker** in Vienna starts the final countdown to monetary union



Farming the flames ... The placards read 'Farmer = future unemployed' and 'Europe needs its farmers' in a protest in central Paris last year. But farmers throughout the EU face losses of up to £10 billion a year from euro-driven changes to agricultural support PHOTOGRAPH: LAURENT REBOURS

Dollar given a run for its money

TO be part of the European project has always been like living on a glacier. At any given moment nothing seems to be moving. But look around after a year or a decade and the progress and the power behind it become awesome. The birth of the new single currency on January 1 will be such a moment.

Its power to transform Europe's political and economic landscape has already been made plain. The ring of confidence that now surrounds the euro zone protected the usually vulnerable currencies like the lira and peseta during this summer's financial panic when Japan trembled and the Russians defaulted on debt.

Britain's decision to take its most profound integrationist step, with the October proposal for a common European defence policy, was a response to the fear of marginalisation induced by exclusion.

Those two developments are of serious importance. They begin to address the great oddity of the European project: it has always been a trading and economic block of huge power, but has acted like a strategic and diplomatic pygmy. Europe now has the opportunity and the weight to assume an equal role with Washington in global financial management, and an increasingly serious one in security affairs for Europe and its strategic hinterland in the Middle East, North Africa and the Caspian oil basin.

There is much more to come from the tectonic geopolitical shifts involved in the emergence, for the first time in 70 years, of a second international reserve currency to stand alongside the dollar.

Nearly two-thirds of central bank currency reserves and bond issues are denominated in dollars, along with nearly three-quarters of world trade. Over the coming years the euro will start taking an ever more equal share.

The Institute of International Economics in Washington reckons that up to a trillion dollars will shift from the US currency to the euro, a process which had better be slow and carefully managed or mass sales of dollars could send currency markets into chaos.

In any event, the pressure on the dollar will be fierce, because it is based in an economy which has a balance of trade deficit of close to 3 per cent of GDP. Euroland, by contrast, enjoys steady trade surpluses.

This means it will be on a kind of probation, as the central banks of Asia and the rest of the world decide which currency they want to hold and corporate treasurers choose which will be the cheapest and most stable currency to borrow.

This competition will reinforce the Treaty requirement of the new European Central Bank to run Europe's monetary policy in a highly orthodox and anti-inflationary manner. Both dollar and euro will be driven to seek to manage their currencies, their interest rates and their underlying economies in such a way as to avoid markets imposing inflation penalties on them.

At the same time, the emergence of a single currency in Europe's single market, with a common interest rate, will inevitably lead to increasing economic co-ordination across the board. Government will not necessarily lead this process. Europe's trade unions are already preparing for joint cross-border collective bargaining, with the euro making it clear to Spaniards and Italians how much less they earn per hour from the same employer than their German colleagues.

Already, Italian banks and firms in the home loan market are reeling under the competition from Britain's Abbey National, which is offering far cheaper mortgages to Italians. German supermarkets are gearing up to face a massive challenge from the world's biggest retailer, the US Wal-Mart chain. French and German banks are bracing for the competition of Visa and Barclaycard and American Express. With far more savings than the US, and half the total amount of stock exchange capitalisation, Europe is poised to be the growth market for financial services.

On the gloomy side, there are three entirely predictable crises lying in wait for Euroland. The first could come quite soon in Ireland, which has cut its interest rates to the standard 3 per cent, even if its GDP growth continues to soar at more than twice that level. Ireland has made borrowing cheaper just when all theory and practice says it should be making it more expensive. This could lead to the first shock, in which one part of Euroland suffers a crisis because of the broader economic policy required by the rest.

The second crisis will be political, and will come as and when Britain has its referendum. Britain will have difficulty finessing the current legal requirement of two years of currency stability inside the exchange rate mechanism, particularly if euroland by then has adopted some tax and other harmonisation measures that raise the threshhold for new entrants.

The third crisis cannot be predicted with precision. But a new global financial crunch will come at some point, perhaps in Brazil or in Asia again if China is forced to devalue. The question then will be whether Euroland has agreed to field an equivalent of the US Treasury secretary to take day-to-day responsibility for the political management of the crisis. Until it does, Euroland will be deploying power without responsibility.

Because these challenges are predictable, there will no excuse if euroland fluffs them.

Nor will Europe's electorates, grappling with a new currency for two years before they get the banknotes and coins which embody it, prove forgiving if sluggish growth keeps Euroland's unemployment level above 10 per cent. The euro, and the orthodox bankers who control it, will take the political blame.

The first problem is that the benefits of the single currency are long-term, whereas the crises will be immediate. And some of the benefits, like downward pressure on German wages and upward pressures on Spanish ones, may not be easy to sell to Europe's voters and employers.

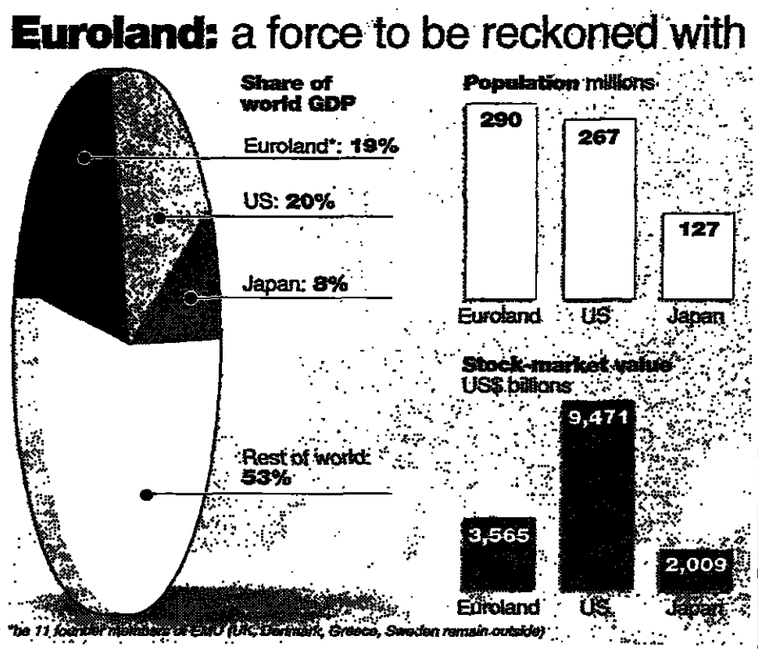
Second, all this is coming at the same time as Europe's leaders gear up for a battle between Northern and Southern countries, between net payers and net recipients to the EU budget. Powerful voting lobbies like farmers look set to lose something like £10 billion a year under farm reform.

Finally comes the American problem, where seven boom years will at some point come to a close. America expects a lot from the euro in sharing the burden of global economic management, which means helping Russia and Asia to recover by buying their exports. America also expects a lot from that other sign of the new Europe, a common defence policy which could at last let Europe handle its own security problems without crying for the American nurse.

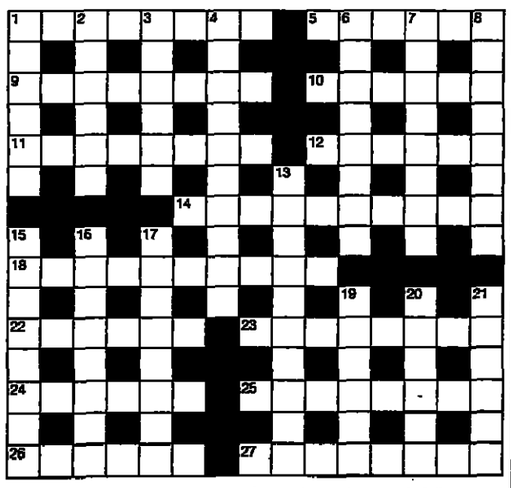
The European glacier is gathering momentum, crushing not just powerful currencies like the franc and mark, but national self-interest and pride, just as politicians lose much of their traditional power to chart the economic course their voters may demand.

And forget about trying to vote out the head of the European Central Bank. Like a glacier, he is too cold and remote to notice.

Euroland: a force to be reckoned with



Guardian Crossword No 21,467
Set by Crispa



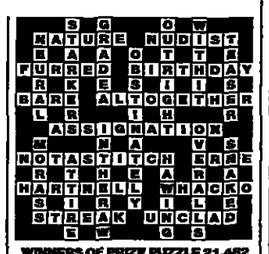
Across

1 Contest that's in the bag! (4,4)
5 Twin Greek characters, affectedly stylish (6)
9 Designed as escort vessels (8)
10 Quivering like a fish (6)
11 No longer cared for, being so lengthy (8)
12 Field marshal having block about famous victory (6)
14 A quiet writer takes chances writing such supplements (10)
18 The paper-seller never downs rum (4-6)
22 Blunder in shamefaced to get a drink (6)
23 He's sorry after taking in people generally (6)
24 Despicable party reneging on promises to pay (6)
25 Disruptive quartet one's seen in a disreputable place (8)
26 A person plaguing the bank? (6)
27 Natural but trendy fellow, broke (8)

Down

1 Struck with hose (6)
2 Wild cat — she must be restrained (6)
3 Deserving severe criticism (6)
4 Agree to maintain connection (10)
6 Spares the married guys (8)
7 The man who's made clear possibly a quarter go to church (8)
8 A perfectionist's fancy table (8)
13 Put on a diet not properly constituted — blast! (10)
15 A single ceremonial symbol of authority should be kept (4,4)
16 All-in cleaning operation (8)
17 A proposal to provide public with running water (8)
19 Exercising iron rule, which is really catty (6)
20 The high-minded individual surmounting general discord (6)
21 Backing up military personnel and others making check (6)

Solution tomorrow



WINNERS OF PRIZE PUZZLE 21,462

This week's winners of a Collins English Millennium Dictionary are Dr. M. P. Steward of Enfield, Middlesex, Mrs. J. Otway of Alresford, Hampshire, N. J. Ruby of Belper, Derbyshire, J. Rosankiewicz of Harrow, Middlesex, and J. V. Tiller of Epsom, Surrey.

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CE ABFPRST

Why I love the euro **Lord Hollick**



Lord Hollick is chief executive of United News & Media. He resigned recently as adviser to the Department of Trade to push the single currency

IN JUST five working days 11 of our partners in Europe will launch the single currency — one of the great shaping events of our times. Britain remains a salt-water fortress. But it is clear that although you can keep Britain out of the euro, you can't keep the euro out of Britain.

When you're trying to work out what's happening an old journalistic adage is to follow the money. In this case, our banks are already offering euro accounts or even mortgages. Businesses are ready to trade in euros, and all the surveys show a huge majority in favour of early membership.

That is because most understand that Britain will enjoy a more stable, competitive and prosperous future inside the single currency than we would huddling in its shadow.

Stable? Well, joining the euro certainly means we would steady our interest and exchange rates. Just think: sterling has varied against the mark by over 40 per cent since late 1995, while our interest rates have been twice as volatile as Germany's this decade.

Greater stability means business can concentrate on what it does best, instead of wasting time struggling to control these financial risks.

Competitive? Joining the euro means we cut the cost of doing business. Our competitors in the euro-zone will trade freely without currency exchange transaction costs. British firms still spend £3 billion a year on transaction in Europe; a huge "trade tax" which would be abolished at a stroke if we joined.

Finally, joining the euro would mean a more prosperous future: we would again be full members of our most important export market — the average German spends four times as much on UK products as the average American.

Export sales, of which we need more to thrive, would translate as jobs and prosperity for UK families. Outside the euro business will find it harder to keep up, and multinationals might look elsewhere to build new factories.

Yes, of course, joining the euro has its risks; that is why we are not joining on day one. But the euro is no longer something to argue about in the abstract. It is here now, and is going to change all our lives — whether we like it or not. But business, at least, knows that it is likely to work effectively.

If it does, Britain's clear national interest lies in joining as soon as is practically possible — because every extra day we hesitate will cost us more. I believe staying out will mean losing out. The UK debate has been polluted by the politics of fear. People haven't had the hard facts, and some of us are determined to tolerate that no longer.

Why I hate the euro **Sir Stanley Kalms**



Sir Stanley Kalms, Dixons' chairman since 1971, is a staunch eurosceptic and campaigner on the dangers of the single currency

LIKE many — including, I suspect, Tony Blair — I have listened with amazement to the honesty with which the German finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, announced the realities of entry into monetary union. He has told the European electorate that, for the euro to succeed, a unified tax structure is a necessity. To the federalists this will come as no surprise. Monetary union is a vital step towards the initiative of full-scale political integration.

Its architects — Kohl Mitterrand, and Delors, saw the euro's economic impact as a means of strengthening the supranational institutions of the European Union. Thus economic and monetary union is not only intended to improve Europe's economic efficiency but to change the way it is governed. It is important to analyse the consequences of an initiative established for a more fundamental objective — total political union and the end of our nation state.

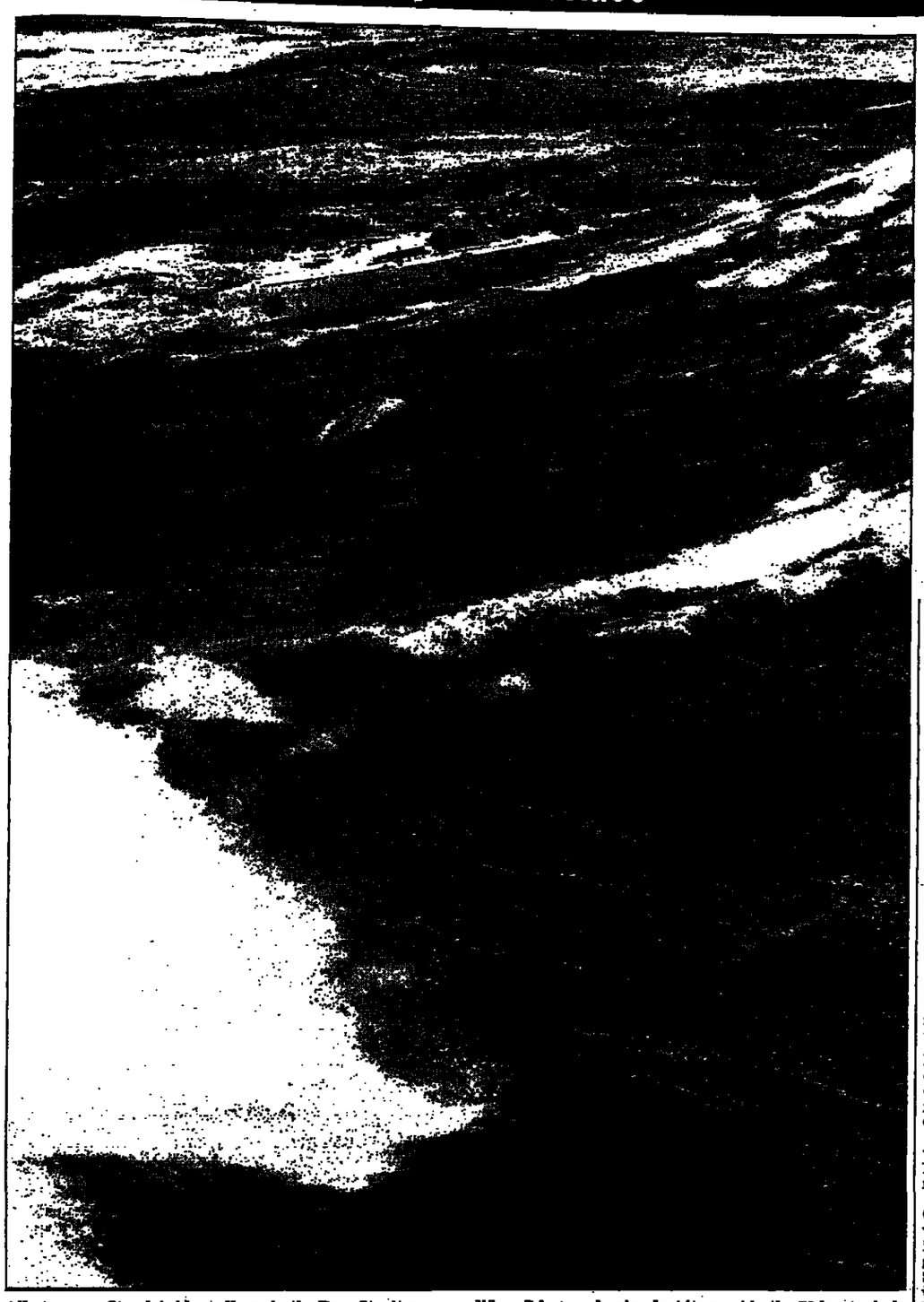
The success or failure of the single currency is dependent on its stability. Automatic fiscal stabilisers are essential if the currency is to react strongly to the erratic behaviour of other currencies. This is almost impossible without centralising some taxation. This enables the creation of the fiscal stabilisers required, and therefore ensures that weaker countries suffering an economic downturn will receive the tax relief they need at the expense of richer countries. This is a similar system to that now in operation in the United States. Although this has not been adopted at present, European federalists have always accepted partly centralised taxation as vital to the single currency's stability. Under the current system the euro 11 will partake in a unique experiment where economic stability is dependent on other options only marginally less repugnant than being part of a unified tax structure. For instance, it is possible that in a depression Britain will be forced to devalue its workforce instead of its currency to make it more competitive. Lafontaine's words reflect the hidden agenda and reveal the hierarchy of common taxation.

Essentially, entry into such a system would hand over the reins controlling our economy to a remote, centralised bureaucracy over which we can have little influence. The British public have been kept in the dark, while those who speak the truth are denounced as scaremongers. The truth is out, and I welcome an honest and open debate. I do not believe the population of Britain shares the views of our European neighbours; we wish to keep our autonomy — over taxation and over our political destiny.

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

Boats capsize in Sydney-Hobart Race



All at sea . . . Stand Aside wallows in the Bass Strait waves, a life-raft in tow, having lost its mast in the 70-knot winds which struck the 115 entrants less than 24 hours after the start of the race PHOTOGRAPH: IAN MAINSBRIDGE

A day after leaving Sydney Harbour (right), the competing yachts were confronted by a fierce gale sweeping through the Bass Strait

Report by Bob Fisher



Briton missing as gales lash fleet

THE British Olympic yachtsman Glyn Charles has been lost overboard, feared drowned, after the 45ft Sword of Orion, on which he was crewing, was flattened and rolled over by giant waves and galeforce winds during the Sydney-Hobart Race.

Charles was washed clear of the boat from the cockpit and, despite an immediate helicopter search in the treacherous Bass Strait, he was not found by the time darkness fell. Hopes for his safety are clearly bleak.

Atrocious weather conditions in the 200-mile-wide Strait, 280 miles east of Melbourne, have led to the withdrawal of 37 of the 115 boats in the race.

The crew of the Winston Churchill have abandoned the ship and are missing, believed to have taken to their life-rafts.

Charles represented Great Britain in the Star class at the Olympic Games in Savannah, Georgia, in 1996 and was a former Laser National Champion.

He had previously sailed with the Orion skipper Steve Kulmar in the Australian Admiral's Cup team in 1997.

Other crew members of the Orion were taken off the boat with a catalogue of injuries including a broken leg. Fierce gales whipping into the Bass Strait have wreaked havoc with the fleet. Boats have been rolled over, some dismasted and crewmen washed overboard. One boat with nine crew aboard was missing when the Radio relay vessel Young Endeavour went to her aid in answer to a Mayday call, while a helicopter was unable to find Winston Churchill which had requested assistance.

The Australian Marine Safety Authority in Canberra was co-ordinating the rescue operations in appalling conditions but was forced to call off fixed wing support last night. It was expected to continue at first light with three helicopters, augmented by an RAAF Orion aircraft from South Australia.

Winston Churchill is one of the nine yachts which took part in the inaugural Sydney-Hobart race in 1945. The 52-foot cutter was racing in its 18th "Hobart" and had recently undergone complete restoration.

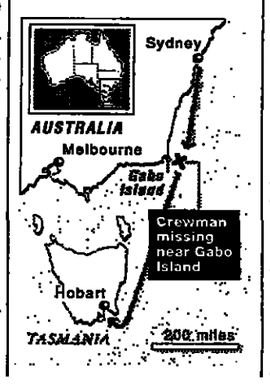
Several members of her crew, led by the owner Richard Winning, had undertaken more of these 630-mile races than the boat.

The alarm over Winston Churchill began when a distress message from the boat indicated that she was "taking water heavily". Her radio operator said the crew were preparing her life-raft — a decision not to be taken lightly as it is usually safer to stay with the boat than take to a life-raft, which should be used only in the direst of emergencies.

The Race spokesman for the the organisers, the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, said early this morning in Hobart: "We are very concerned with the situation regarding the Winston Churchill. When Young Endeavour reached the rendezvous area, there was no sign of the boat or a life-raft."

The brigantine training ship, a 200th birthday present to Australia from Britain, continued to search until dark and will resume the search at first light.

Severe gales hit the fleet as it began its crossing of the Bass Strait, which separates Tasmania from mainland Australia. The race leaders, the two maxi-raters Larry Ellison's Sayonara and George Snow's Brindabella, were initially aided by favourable north-easterly winds and were well inside the course record set by Hasso Plattner's Morning Glory two years ago.



But a vicious change in the wind, with gusts screaming to 80 knots brought about by a very deep depression, has almost certainly put paid to record breaking and made it totally a matter of survival for the smaller boats.

Huge seas, towering almost to the mastheads of the small fry, the 30- to 35-footers, have been able to turn some boats over, rolling them through an unpleasant 360 degrees and washing their crews from the comparative safety of their cockpits. John Campbell was separated from the 38-foot Kingurra for 40 minutes but later recovered by a police helicopter using a heat-sensitive searching aid.

All 12 members of the crew of the 40-foot Stand Aside, skippered by James Hallion, were taken off by helicopter after the yacht was dismasted. Several of the crew were injured, one losing fingers and another with head wounds.

Another dismasted yacht, the 41-foot B-52, skippered by Wayne Millar, also suffered structural damage when the mast collapsed, and was taking water. It was still missing last night.

The America's Cup skipper Iain Murray was another in trouble, forced to turn back with rudder damage to ABN Amro.

Winds had last night "moderated" to 40-45 knots in the Bass Strait.

Look over your shoulder, Mrs P. **Chris Hawkins** sees a challenger to Jenny Pitman emerge from the King George VI Steeplechase

Williams puts pursuers through the Mill

IT WAS Lester Piggott who reportedly shouted the words, "Move over, grandad, I'm coming through" when asking Gordon Richards for some racing room at Ascot one day in the early Fifties. Whether he actually said it matters not; the prophetic line has passed into sporting folklore.

Now Venetia Williams would be top modest to even think such a thing but some might be tempted to say it for her after the victory of her Teeton Mill in the Pertemps King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day.

For this remarkable young woman from Hereford seems well embarked on the process of shifting several "grandfathers" and one notable "grandmother" from the top of the National Hunt training tree.

Jenny Pitman's reign as the leading woman trainer is definitely under threat and although Martin Pipe's huge seasonal totals will never be eclipsed, Williams has a strike rate that puts them both in the shade.

Of course Mrs P is still ahead when it comes to the big races, with a haul of two Cheltenham Gold Cups, two Grand Nationals and a King George, but Teeton Mill looked so superior to the opposition here that he could well go on to win both this season's remaining premier steeplechases.

The key to the success of this former hunter-chaser, who will be 10 on New Year's Day and has taken his time to come to the fore, is his jumping which is almost as spectacular as those two other great greys and multiple King George winners Desert Orchid and One Man.

Norman Williamson, his jockey, partnered Master Oats to victory in the Gold Cup and compared Teeton Mill favourably to his 1995 Cheltenham winner.

"He can stand off his fences or get in close and fiddle," Williamson said. "He reminds me very much of Master Oats who might not have seemed to be going that well on the first circuit but halfway down the back just as the others were starting to struggle would suddenly get into top gear.

"We always thought this horse needed faster ground so what he'll be like when he gets it is anybody's guess."

Teeton Mill did not come to Williams until last April having been bought for what she thought was an "expensive" 40,000 guineas by Stephen Winstanley, the mastermind behind "The Winning Line" tipping service.

"He'd had leg trouble and as a nine-year-old I thought they had paid plenty for him," said the trainer. "But he had been with Caroline Bailey and had done a lot of hunting and knew all about jumping so I was delighted to get him.

"But I never thought he was this good and I even remember saying that I thought the handicapper had given him too much weight with 10st 5lb in the Hennessy. Now it looks as if he could have won that with another two stone.

"The original target was the Grand National and he's still a possible for that even though he's bound to have a lot of weight now. He'll definitely be entered as he's not a young horse and you don't know what's round the corner.

"The Gold Cup is next but I'm not sure whether or where he'll have another run before that.

"He's an easy horse to train and I ride him a lot myself. He's such a good jumper that I don't school him.

"He didn't jump a fence between the Hennessy and today's race. I rode him in his final piece of work. It wasn't that I didn't want anybody else to know what was happening but so that I'd know myself."

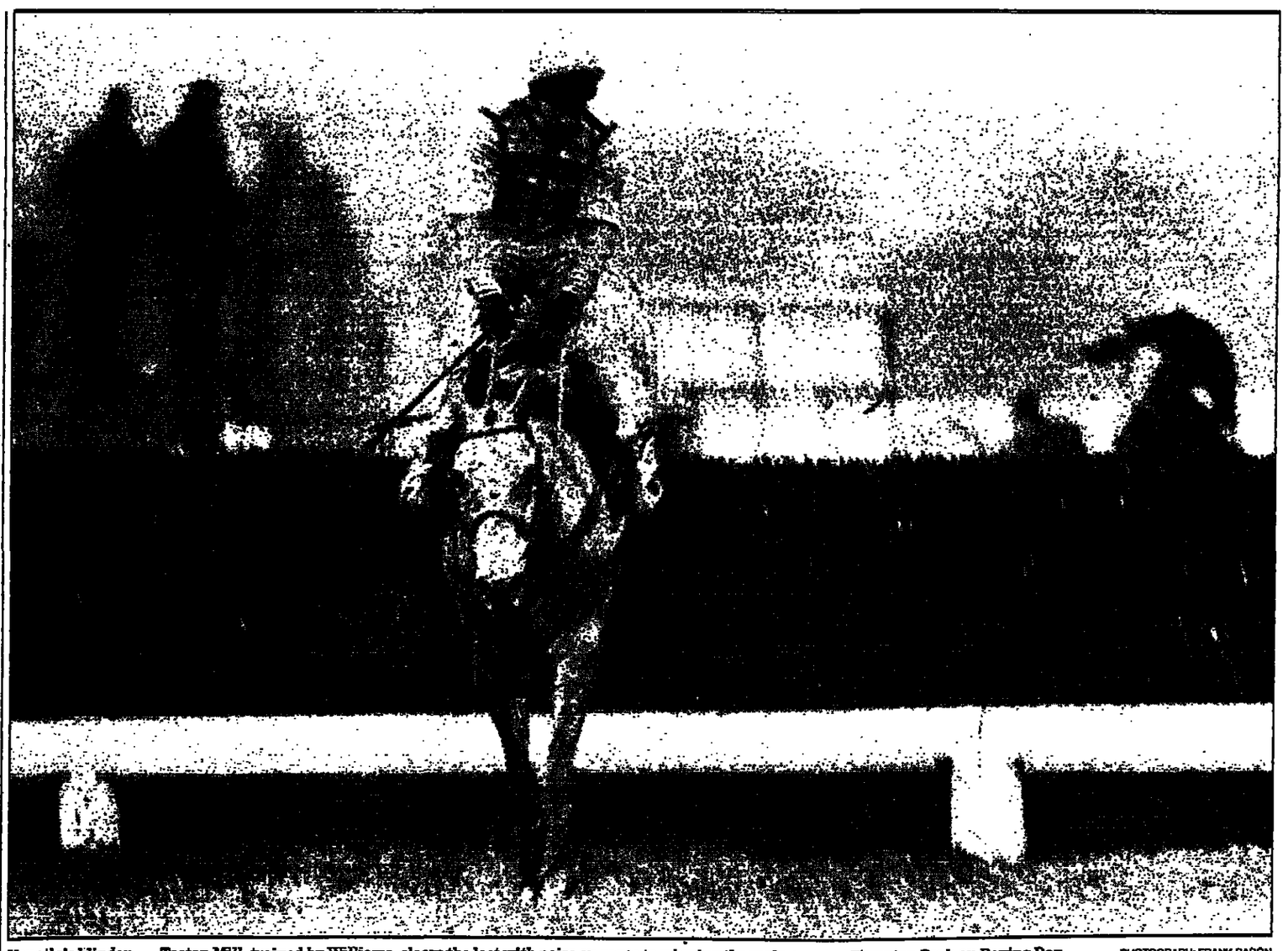
This perhaps gives a little insight into the way Williams works. Modest and shy on the outside, she is said to be something of a chameleon. Apparently she knows her own mind, makes sure she gets her own way and does not suffer fools while steadfastly refusing to divulge her age. Not quite the delicate flower she appears perhaps.

She learned the training ropes as secretary and assistant to John Edwards, of Pearlyman fame, and then after a year as assistant to Martin Pipe set up on her own three years ago.

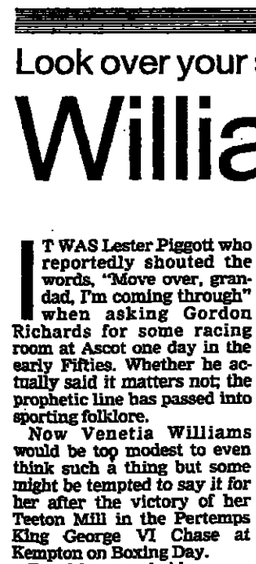
Her 60-box yard is now full and her success has surprised her. Quite why she is so good she does not know but she says getting decent horses in the first place is the key. Rsther like Pipe, who revolutionised the game, her method is based on interval training — she has a five-furlong uphill gallop and the horses go up twice.

Trainers come and go but one has the feeling Williams is here to stay. Make room for an emerging talent.

Holiday racing, page 14



Venetia's blinder . . . Teeton Mill, trained by Williams, clears the last with poise en route to winning the main event at Kempton Park on Boxing Day PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON



Stormin' Norman . . . Jockey Williamson leads Teeton into the winner's enclosure

Racing

Chris Hawkins believes the in-form Nicky Henderson can continue his winning run with victory in the Welsh National.

All the facts point to a win for Fiddling

TEETON MILL proved in the King George VI Chase that a horse in good form can make a nonsense of official ratings and following this line of reasoning Fiddling The Facts looks a good bet to land the Coral Welsh National at Chepstow this afternoon.

Fiddling The Facts, a mare in her second season over fences, comes from the Nicky Henderson stable (five winners on Boxing Day) which is enjoying a fantastic run. She loves soft ground and the trip of three and three-quarter miles should hold no terrors.

Third to Teeton Mill in the Hennessy at Newbury, she has by no means an insuperable task at the weights with 10st 6lb, although strictly on the book she has to improve to beat Eudipe and, on last season's form, Forest Ivory.

Eudipe was 15 lengths runner-up in the Hennessy and was clearly attempting the impossible in trying to give 8lb to Teeton Mill.

It was another good effort from this Martin Pipe chaser who was placed in the Hennessy, Scottish National and Whitbread Gold Cup last season and deserves to win a big handicap.

He had six lengths to spare over Fiddling The Facts at Newbury and is only 2lb worse off, but whether he will like the ground as much as the mare is open to question.

Forest Ivory, trained by David Nicholson, whose stable has not been enjoying the best of luck recently, was beaten six lengths by Fiddling The Facts at Kempton on Boxing Day last year, but has an 11lb pull now which puts him in with a definite chance.

Supporters of Macgeorge will no doubt point out that Forest Ivory was well beaten by Richard Lee's gelding at Warwick last month when both were making their reappearances.

But Macgeorge has since finished second to Tamarindo at Cheltenham where he had a hard race and connections are worried about the effects of that if today's race becomes a slog, which seems inevitable. Dom Samourai has been ante-post favourite since the weights came out on the strength of his second to See More Business over the course in the Rehearsal Chase. He loves Chepstow and finished second in this race last year to Earth Summit, being 2lb better off for one and three-quarter lengths.

Earth Summit, of course, went on to glory at Aintree in the Grand National and, incredibly, seems to have emerged from that gruelling duel with Suny Bay better than ever this season.

He put up a terrific effort on unfavourable terms when second to his old rival at Haydock recently and so even with 11st 10lb cannot be ruled out.

Torduff Express won the Betterware Cup at Ascot in good style, which would give him a chance, even though he is carrying 10lb more than his original long-handicap weight and meets Kendal Cavalier on markedly inferior terms compared to their running at Cheltenham last season.

He is clearly in good heart, however, and should make the frame, but Fiddling The Facts (2.15) has improved for her Hennessy run according to her trainer, who is hopeful of a very good run.

Flagship Uberalles (1.10), a four-year-old at present, looks a useful young recruit to the chasing ranks and should prove the point in the Caolor Gas Novice Chase.

At Kempton there is a disappointing overall turn-out and only five go to post for the £40,000-added Pertemps Christmas Hurdle. Dato Star is the form horse here having beaten French Holly convincingly at Newcastle in the Fighting Fifth Hurdle, but Kerawi (2.20) could upset the applecart. He won this race in heavy ground last year and goes particularly well on this sharp track.

Dr Leunt (2.55), third to Cyfor Malta and fourth to Northern Starlight on his two most recent attempts over Cheltenham's two miles five furlongs, should be well suited by the step up to three miles in the Pertemps Executive Handicap Chase.



Leading light . . . The Martin Pipe-trained Dom Samourai is one of the market leaders for today's big prize at Chepstow PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN LYNCH

Dorans Pride can take the shine off Florida Pearl

Tony Paley

DORANS PRIDE can upset Ireland's chief Cheltenham Gold Cup hope Florida Pearl with victory in the mouthwatering Ericsson Chase at Leopardstown today.

Florida Pearl, who will go off a short-priced favourite, was rated the best chasing propspect seen for a long time by many experts when winning all his three races last season.

He ended his campaign with a convincing defeat of Saturday's King George runner-up Escartefigue in the Royal & SunAlliance Chase at Cheltenham when his faultless jumping and turn of foot was certainly impressive.

The Willie Mullins-trained runner is unbeaten in six starts and seems sure to prove hard to get past this season, but may be worth opposing at such skinny odds in his most difficult task to date against two proven top-class performers in Dorans Pride and Suny Bay.

With the ground set to ride very testing today his natural speed could be blunted, while the favourite is an inexperienced chaser in a field of Gold Cup calibre and his jumping will be seriously put to the test.

Dorans Pride started a worthy favourite for this year's Cheltenham Gold Cup after a successful campaign and ran a close third on ground that was on the lively side. He subsequently disappointed in atrocious conditions at Aintree, but may have been feeling the effects of his run in the Gold Cup.

The selection started off this season with two comfortable victories and then did not jump as fluently as usual when beaten by Imperial Call last time.

That was over two and a half miles and Dorans Pride is much more effective at this longer trip when racing in top-class company.

Suny Bay has an obvious chance on the form he showed when beating Escartefigue in the Edward Hanmer Chase on his reappearance at Haydock in November.

However, he was much less impressive when beating Earth Summit over the same course and distance a month later when the weights were very much in his favour.

Suny Bay is a horse who does not stand a lot of racing and as a third tough race in the space of two and a half months may prove one too many Dorans Pride (2.40) is suggested as the value bet at 5–1 with Ladbrokes.

Calling Wild provided trainer Paul Nicholls and jockey Joe Tizzard with compensation for the eclipse of See More Business at Kempton on Saturday when landing the Paddy Power Handicap Chase at Leopardstown yesterday.

The 8–1 chance galloped the opposition into the very heavy ground in the Grade Two event to take the winner's prize of over £66,000.

Stack in 'critical' condition

TOMMY STACK, one of Ireland's top trainers, was reported to be in a critically ill condition with a viral infection last night.

No one was available for official comment at Stack's Thomastown Castle base in Co Tipperary, but a spokesman did admit: "He's critical and the next 24 hours will be crucial."

The spokesman added that Stack was at County Cork Hospital, where he was reported to be "seriously ill, but stable."

Stack, 53, has held a training licence since 1986.

His highlights have included Las Meninas winning the 1,000 Guineas in 1994 and Tarascon's triumph in this year's Irish 1,000 Guineas.

Stack was formerly a successful National Hunt jockey and rode Red Rum to his record third Grand National in 1977.

Chepstow Jackpot card

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
12.35	Artemis	Artemis
1.10	Flagship Uberalles (nb)	Flagship Uberalles
1.40	Miss Orphan	Miss Orphan
2.15	Fiddling The Facts (nap)	Earth Summit (nap)
2.50	Explain This	Explain This
3.20	Gratomi	Cyborg De Beaufai
3.50	Scarlet Emperor	—

Oval, left-handed undulating course, nearly 2m round with 250yds run-in. Five fences in home straight put emphasis on stamina.
Going: Soft. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Seven-day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: None.
Visored: 2.50 Angus Airways.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing.
F.Flat.

12.35 SOUTH-WEST RACING CLUB NOVICE HURDLE
2m 4f 110yds £3,241 (16 declared)

101	02	**Artemis** (24) N Henderson 6-11-0	M A Fitzgerald ●90	
102	2F-5PD	**Clonshire Castle** (25) P Hobbs 5-11-0	R Widger (5)	—
103	5231F/	**Elouis** (771) M Pipe 6-11-0	A P McCoy ★	—
104	0/0-	**Eddeybrook** (333) M Jackson 5-11-0	S Wynne	87
105	30-4	**Fountain Bank** (42) J Spearing 5-11-0	T J Murphy	86
106	5U	**I'm Imran** (20) (BF) C Egerton 7-11-0	J A McCarthy	87
107	00	**Inferno** (30) Mrs J Pitman 5-11-0	B Powell	—
108	52/4-U	**Jalapeno** (46) N Twiston-Davies 7-11-0	T Jenks	80
109	00	**Nearly A Doctor** (23) P Hobbs 5-11-0	R Farrant	86
110	6PU-PF	**Otter River** (11) O Carter 9-11-0	S Burrough	88
111		**Riverside Stroll** M Pipe 8-11-0	R Greene	—
112	400-F5	**Sandoran** (27) M Hill 5-11-0	D Salter (3)	84
113	2FF41-	**Storm Castle** (316) D Arbuthnot 6-11-0	D Gallagher	88
114	0/5-50	**Strong Magic** (25) Miss C Johnsey 6-11-0	W Marston	87
115	/12-34	**Winston Run** (33) J Williams 6-11-0	R Walsley	89
116	1103-	**Indian Spring** (266) M Pipe 6-10-9	C Maude	—

Betting: 3–1 Elouis, 7–2 Winston Run, 11–2 Artemis, Riverside Stroll, 8–1 Jalapeno, 10–1 Storm Castle, 12–1 Indian Spring.

FORM GUIDE – **Artemis:** Led to 2nd, jumped slowly 3rd, hard ridden approaching 2 out, unable to quicken, 2nd of 11, 10l behind Native King at Sandown 2m nov hdle, Gd. **Elouis:** Useful over fences in France, won over 3m at Auteuil in '96, latest, fell at the 6th in race won by Eudipe at Auteuil 2m4f ch, Sft. **Eddeybrook:** Held up, headway 6f out, hard driven over 3f out, soon beaten, 8th of 22, 17l behind Percy Parkeeper at Huntingdon 2m NH Flat, Gd-Sft. **Fountain Bank:** Behind, driven along halfway, some late headway, never nearer, 4th of 9, 29l behind Burundi at Leicester 2m nov hdle, Sft. **I'm Imran:** Blundered and unseated rider at the 3rd in race won by Riot Leader at Huntingdon 3m-mdn ch, Sft. **Inferno:** In touch 12l, 9th of 22, 34l behind Eddy's Son at Warwick 2m NH Flat, Sft. **Jalapeno:** Headway 7th, every chance 3 out, beaten when blundered and unseated rider 2 out in race won by The Writer at Taunton 3m nov hdle, Gd. **Nearly A Doctor:** Behind from 3rd, 8th of 13, 34l behind Young Devereaux at Chepstow 2m mdn hdle, Gd. **Otter River:** In touch when fell at the 8th in race won by Royal Barge at Exeter 3m2f hcap ch, Sft. **Sandoran:** Headway to chase winner 3rd, lost place and weakened 6th, 5th of 8, well behind Beau at N Abbot 2m1f nov hdle, Sft. **Storm Castle:** Beat Viking Rod by 3l at Knockanard 3m point-to-point, Sft. **Strong Magic:** Held up and behind, headway 7th, ridden 3 out, soon weakened, 8th of 13, 41l behind Yorkshire Edition, with Clonshire Castle (rec 7lb) 11th, well behind, at Wincanton 2m6f nov hdle, Gd-Sft. **Winston Run:** Prominent until weakened approaching last, 4th of 15, 12l behind Rio's King at Chepstow 2m4f nov hdle, Gd-Sft. **Indian Spring:** Led 10f, lost place 4f out, stayed on again towards finish, 3rd of 12, well behind King's Road at Aintree 2m NH Flat, Hvy.

1.10 CALOR GAS NOVICE CHASE
2m 3f 110yds £3,805 (8 declared) — BBC2

201	110-01	**Potentate** (14) (C) M Pipe 7-11-8	A P McCoy	89
202	20P-33	**Bozo** (20) B Ryall 7-11-3	N Griffiths (5)	86
203	/6633-	**Lewesdon Manor** (278) P R Webber 7-11-3	J A McCarthy	85
204	F/PP-3	**Lough Leia Spirit** (13) Miss C Johnsey 7-11-3	W Marston	86
205	60-300	**Pleasureland** (24) (D) C Popham 5-11-3	R Farrant	—
206	UR/PP0	**Royal Sweep** (18) Dr P Pritchard 9-11-3	Dr P Pritchard	—
207	330P4-	**Strong Tel** (255) (C) M Pipe 8-11-3	R Greene	—
208	13-221	**Flagship Uberalles** (24) P Nicholls 4-10-11	M A Fitzgerald	●90

Betting: 4–5 Flagship Uberalles, 9–4 Potentate, 10–1 Strong Tel, 12–1 Bozo, 16–1 Pleasureland, 20–1 Lewesdon Manor, 25–1 Lough Leia Spirit, 50–1 Royal Sweep.

FORM GUIDE – **Potentate:** Close up, led 7th to 4 out, led again next, clear 2 out, ran on well, won by 4l from Royal Toast at Plumpton 2m nov ch, Sft. **Bozo:** Not jump well, ridden 8th, went moderate 3rd 3 out, one pace, 3rd of 8, 11l behind Cipriani Queen at Fontwell 2m3f nov hcap ch, Sft. **Lewesdon Manor:** Held up, 3rd when mistake 12th, ridden approaching 14th, soon weakened, tailed off when blundered last, virtually pulled up flat, 3rd of 4, well behind Music Therapy at Newbury 3m nov ch, Gd-Sft. **Lough Leia Spirit:** Led to 10th, ridden and weakened approaching 3 out, 3rd of 8, 33l behind Ask Antony at Hereford 3m1f mdn ch, Gd-Sft. **Pleasureland:** Chased leaders, in touch until weakened 7th, 8th of 13, 41l behind Arctic Charmer at Exeter 2m7f hcap hdle, Gd. **Royal Sweep:** Prominent until weakened after 6th, tailed off, 15th of 18, 49l behind Desert Power at Ludlow 2m nov claim hdle, Gd-Sft. **Strong Tel:** Held up, headway halfway, chasing leaders 4 out, one pace from next, 4th of 9, 15l behind Kit Smartie at Ayr 2m6f nov hdle, Gd. **Flagship Uberalles:** Held up, headway to lead approaching 4 out, clear 2 out, unchallenged, won by 13l from Sarsum Corda at Exeter 2m1f nov ch, Gd.

1.40 FINALE JUNIOR HURDLE RACE 3YO
2m 110yds £14,955 (5 declared) — BBC2

301		**Chief Cashier** (F77) G Balding 11-0	B Fenton	—
302	61	**Hunt Hill** (45) (D) J J O'Neill 11-0	A Maguire	88
303	621	**Legend Of Love** (18) B Llewellyn 11-0	B Powell	86
304	212242	**Out'N'About** (10) (D) (BF) P Nicholls 11-0	M A Fitzgerald	89
305	21111	**Miss Orphan** (37) (D) M Pipe 10-9	A P McCoy	●90

Betting: 5–6 Miss Orphan, 7–2 Out'n'about, 11–2 Hunt Hill, 8–1 Legend Of Love, 10–1 Chief Cashier.

FORM GUIDE – **Chief Cashier:** Pulled hard, headway over 2f out, hard ridden over 1f out, one pace, 6th of 13, 9l behind Borgia at Leicester 1m4f hcap, Gd-Sft. **Hunt Hill:** Tracked leaders, hit 5th, led and mistake 2 out, soon clear, won by 10l from Saxon Victory at Newcastle 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft. **Legend Of Love:** Chased leaders, mistake 3rd, led approaching 2 out, stayed on well, won by 6l from Thanks Keith at M Rasen 2m1f nov hdle, Hvy. **Out'N'About:** Led to 2 out, hard ridden approaching last, unable to quicken, 2nd of 10, 2l behind Roborant at Lingfield 2m nov hdle, Hvy. **Miss Orphan:** Made all, mistake 3rd, clear 6th, easily, won by 16l from Kawama Samson at Ascot 2m nov hdle, Gd-Sft.

2.15 CORAL WELSH NATIONAL HANDICAP CHASE (SHOWCASE & TRIFECTA RACE)
3m 5f 110yds £34,935 (14 declared) — BBC2

401	651-12	**Earth Summit** (16) (CD) N Twiston-Davies 10-11-10	T Jenks	●90
402	3323-2	**Eudipe** (30) M Pipe 6-10-12	A P McCoy	88
403	111-12	**Macgeorge** (17) R Lee 8-10-10	B Powell	89
404	40P-12	**Dom Samourai** (23) (C) M Pipe 7-10-9	C Maude ★	87
405	2PF-3	**Fiddling The Facts** (30) N Henderson 7-10-6	M A Fitzgerald	86
406	66-23F	**Samlee** (24) (C) (D) P Hobbs 9-10-0	R Farrant ★	88
407	13/6-5	**Him Of Praise** (30) (D) O Sherwood 8-10-0	J A McCarthy	86
408	111-40	**Sail By The Stars** (30) (C) H Daly 9-10-0	S Wynne	87
409	112-43	**Forest Ivory** (23) (BF) D Nicholson 7-10-0	A Maguire	88
410	3/F13-	**Arfer Mole** (339) J Old 10-10-0	T J Murphy	84
411	2P-121	**Torduff Express** (9) (4lb ex) P Nicholls 7-10-0	W Marston	87
412	11P1-2	**Kendal Cavalier** (23) (C) N Hawke 8-10-0	B Fenton	85
413	1FP4-P	**Choisty** (13) (D) H Haynes 8-10-0	B Widger (5)	84
414	0P/2-3	**See Enough** (16) (C) R Buckler 10-10-0	D O'Sullivan (7)	83

Best early-morning prices: 9–2 Dom Samourai (C), Earth Summit (H), 13–2 Macgeorge (T), 7–1 Eudipe (C) 8–1 Fiddling The Facts (L), 9–1 Torduff Express (H, T), 16–1 Sail By The Stars (C, H, T), Forest Ivory (L), 18–1 Kendal Cavalier (H), Samlee (T), 20–1 Him Of Praise (C), 33–1 Arfer Mole (general), 150–1 Choisty (C, H), See Enough (C, H, T)
● G (Coral), H (Hill's), T (Tote), L (Ladbrokes).

FORM GUIDE – **Earth Summit:** Chased leaders, disputed lead 4 out, every chance 2 out, no extra flat, 2nd of 5, 3l behind Suny Bay at Haydock 3m ch, Sft. **Eudipe:** Led until 2nd, led 14th until 3 out, weakened approaching last, 2nd of 16, 15l behind Teeton Mill, with **Fiddling The Facts** (rec 4lb) 3rd, btn 21l, **Him Of Praise** (rec 17lb) 5th, btn 39l, at **Sail By The Stars** (rec 8lb) 7th, well behind, at Newbury 3m2f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **Macgeorge:** Led to 2nd, led 4th to 16th, blundered 4 out, rallied flat, ran on, 2nd of 12, 1l behind Tamarindo at Cheltenham 3m1f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **Dom Samourai:** Made most, ridden 11th, chased winner approaching 3 out, stayed on flat, 2nd of 3, 1l behind See More Business at Chepstow 3m hcap ch, Gd. **Samlee:** Always prominent, 4th when fell 5 out in race won by Thermal Warrior at Sandown 3m5f hcap ch, Gd. **Arfer Mole:** Behind from 9th, mistake 11th, tailed off when virtually pulled up flat, 3rd of 4, well behind Cool Dawn at Ascot 3m hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **Torduff Express:** Chased leader, led 14th, clear 3 out, ridden approaching 2 out, ran on well, won by 18l from Callisoe Bay at Ascot 3m hcap ch, Gd Sft. **Kendal Cavalier:** Always prominent, outpaced when left 2nd and hampered 4 out, no impression, 2nd of 6, 5l behind General Pongo, with Forest Ivory (gave 12lb) 3rd, btn 7l, at Chepstow 3m2f hcap ch, Gd. **Choisty:** Chased winner 13th to 15th, soon weakened, tailed off when pulled up 2 out in race won by Folly Road at Folkestone 3m2f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **See Enough:** Led to 3rd, ridden 14th, soon weakened, 3rd of 5 33l behind Executive King at Lingfield 3m nov ch, Sft.

2.50 RUSSELL BALDWIN AND BRIGHT NOVICE HURDLE
2m 110yds £18,120 (9 declared) — BBC2

501	300-12	**Explain This** (46) (D) C Mann 6-11-8	J Magee	●90
502	P45-26	**Abajany** (44) (BF) M Channon 4-11-5	D Byrne	85
503	3/00-3	**Amothebambo** (16) R Baker 5-11-5	G Shenkin	82
504	P4-P43	**Angus Airways** (64) J Norton 5-11-5	R Farrant ★	—
505	664522	**Jolly Side** (32) (D) (BF) A Mullins (IRE) 5-11-5	A P McCoy	87
506		**Lanigan** R Hollinshead 5-11-5	Gary Lyons	—
507	4	**Lyreen Wonder** (30) A L Moore (IRE) 5-11-5	M A Fitzgerald	88
508	351-15	**Kates Charm** (58) (D) (BF) R Alner 5-11-0	A Maguire	86
509	-04P60	**Tudor Gale** (36) J O'Shea 5-11-0	G Tormey	81

Betting: 6–4 Explain This, 9–4 Lyreen Wonder, 9–2 Kates Charm, 7–1 Abajany, 10–1 Jolly Side, 20–1 Amothebambo, 25–1 Angus Airways.

FORM GUIDE – **Explain This:** Held up, headway 3 out, every chance when mistake last, ran on, 2nd of 17, 2l behind Premier Generation at Cheltenham 2m nov hcap hdle, Gd. **Abajany:** Headway approaching 3 out, weakened approaching 2 out, 6th of 9, well behind Dragon King at Windsor 2m hcap hdle, Gd-Sft. **Amothebambo:** Headway 7th, ridden 3 out, bumped 2 out, one pace, 3rd of 15, 7l behind Barneys Bell at Lingfield 2m3f nov hdle, Sft. **Angus Airways:** Held up, headway 4 out, challenging for 2nd from next, one pace approaching last, 3rd of 5, 18l behind Barton at Wetherby 2m7f nov hdle, Sft. **Jolly Side:** Led, headed and no extra between last 2, kept on well flat, 2nd of 16, 1½l behind Native Wit at Thurles 2m6f mdn hdle, Hvy. **Lyreen Wonder:** Held up, progress 3 out, mistake next, ran on one pace, 4th of 9, 10l behind Snow Dragon at Fairyhouse 2m2f hdle, Sft. **Kates Charm:** Held up, chased winner 9th until approaching 2 out, soon weakened, 5th of 8, 43l behind Prior Less Hassle at Plumpton 2m4f nov hdle, Sft. **Tudor Gale:** Always behind, tailed off, 12th of 17, well behind Country House at Warwick 2m4f nov hdle, Gd.

3.20 LEVY BOARD HANDICAP CHASE
2m 3f 110yds £4,955 (6 declared)

601	/1111-	**Tipstaff** (400) M Pipe 5-12-0	A P McCoy ★	86
602	PF-P30	**Cyborg De Beaufai** (17) Mrs L Taylor 7-11-8	T J Murphy	●90
603	245-33	**Storm Damage** (34) P Nicholls 6-10-11	M A Fitzgerald	88
604	1-3FU2	**Gratomi** (9) (D) (BF) P Ritchens 8-10-0	S Fox	89
605	2-4231	**Rovestar** (30) C Popham 7-10-0	M Griffiths (5) ★	85
606	/P5UP-	**Benjamin Lancaster** (286) (C) M Griffin 14-10-0	S Burrough	—

Betting: 5–6 Tipstaff, 5–1 Storm Damage, 11–2 Gratomi, 13–2 Cyborg De Beaufai, 8–1 Rovestar, 25–1 Benjamin Lancaster.

FORM GUIDE – **Tipstaff:** Much improved performer in France winning twice over hurdles and twice over fences, latest, won by 6l from Fil Noir at Auteuil 2m4f hcap ch, Gd. **Cyborg De Beaufai:** Chased leaders to 5th, soon ridden and weakened, 7th of 10, 40l behind Smolensk at Doncaster 2m hcap ch, Gd. **Storm Damage:** Always prominent, mistake 8th, weakened last, 3rd of 12, 12l behind Mountain Path at Worcester 2m7f hcap ch, Hvy. **Gratomi:** Chased leader from 3rd, led 9th to 2 out, one pace, 2nd of 5, 6l behind Peace Lord at Warwick 2m4f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **Rovestar:** Chased leader until led 4th, ridden out, won by 5l from Moose Bird at Warwick 2m hcap ch, Sft. **Benjamin Lancaster:** In touch until 6th, weakened next, pulled up at the 10th in race won by Hold Your Ranks at N Abbot 2m5f hcap ch, Sft.

3.50 CHEPSTOW CHAMPIONSHIP STAKES STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE
2m 110yds £6,280 (8 declared)

1	1-1	**Eddy's Son** (30) (D) D Nicholson 6-11-7	R Massey	
2	1-	**Brave King** (260) (D) G McCourt 5-11-4	W Marston	
3	1	**Frosty Canyon** (33) (CD) P R Webber 5-11-4	M A Fitzgerald	
4	1	**Fu's Baby** (54) (D) M Pipe 4-11-4	C Maude	
5	421-10	**Prominent Profile** (43) (D) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-4	J Goldstein	
6	1	**Queens Harbour** (22) (D) Mrs J Pitman 4-11-4	B Powell	
7	1	**Scarlet Emperor** (45) (D) Mrs J Pitman 4-11-4	D Leahy	
8	2-2	**Star Of Dungannon** (33) (BF) M Pipe 5-11-0	A P McCoy	

Betting: 5–3 Scarlet Emperor, 7–2 Star Of Dungannon, 4–1 Frosty Canyon, 5–1 Brave King, 8–1 Eddy's Son, Queens Harbour, 10–1 Fu's Baby, 20–1 Prominent Profile.

FORM GUIDE – **Brave King:** Held up, headway 4f out, led over 1f out, left clear inside final furlong, won by 10l from Silk Vestments at Towcester 2m NH Flat, Sft. **Frosty Canyon:** Held up, headway halfway, ridden to lead inside final furlong, ran on well, won by 1½l from Star Of Dungannon at Chepstow 2m NH Flat, Gd-Sft. **Scarlet Emperor:** Headway 6f out, led 3f out, quickened clear over 1f out, impressive, won by 6l from Adico at Cheltenham 2m NH Flat, Gd. **Star Of Dungannon:** Chased leader, led 10f out, clear 2f out, ridden and headed final furlong, 2nd of 13, 1½l behind Frosty Canyon at Chepstow 2m NH Flat, Gd-Sft.

Leopardstown

2.40 ERICSSON CHASE (Live on BBC2 & CH4)
3m £49,000 (6 declared)

1	211F-24	**Boss Doyle** (38) (CD) M Morris 6-12-0	J R Barry ★
2	115/4	**Buck Rogers** (8) V Bowens 9-12-0	B Bowens
3	134-112	**Dorans Pride** (22) (CD) (BF) M Hourigan 9-12-0	P Carberry
4	11/111-	**Florida Pearl** (285) (C) (D) W P Mullins 6-12-0	R Dunwoody
5	2663024	**Merry People** (15) (D) J Queally 10-12-0	J F Titley
6	1452-11	**Suny Bay** (16) (D) C Sherwood (UK) 9-12-0	G Bradley

Betting: 5–4 Florida Pearl, 6–4 Suny Bay, 4–1 Dorans Pride, 8–1 Boss Doyle, 33–1 Buck Rogers, 100–1 Merry People.

KEEPING TRACK
09064 700 +

	COMMENTARY	RESULTS
KEMPTON	141	151
CHEPSTOW	142	152
WETHERBY	143	153
ALL COURSES COMMENTARY	09064 700 140	
ALL COURSES RESULTS	09064 700 150	

The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Kempton programme with guide to the TV form

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
12.40	Fanfaron	Fanfaron
1.15	New Bird	New Bird
1.45	World Express	World Express (nb)
2.20	Kerawi	Dato Star
2.55	Dr Leunt	Time Won't Wait
3.25	Big Matt	Big Matt

Flat, rather sharp, right-handed track of 1m5f with 175yds run-in.
Going: Soft. ★ Denotes blinkers
Seven-day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: None. **Visored:** None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing.

12.40 PERTEMPS TRAINING & CONSULTANCY WAYWARD LAD NOVICE CHASE
2m 4f 110yds £10,211 (2 declared)

1	321-1	**Fanfaron** (34) (D) C Egerton 5-11-7	R Johnson	●90
2	-F2212	**Hoh Express** (9) P R Webber 6-11-7	A Thornton	88

Betting: 1–4 Fanfaron, 11–4 Hoh Express.

1.15 PERTEMPS JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE 3YO
2m £5,084 (9 declared) — CH4

1	3P-111	**Trailside** (31) (D) M Pipe 11-7	G Supple (3)	88
2		**Dancing Dervish** (F98) S Mellor 11-0	C Webb	—
3		**Jamoria Dancer** (F75) M Banks 11-0	M Richards	—
4		**Mystery Guest** (F77) Miss H Knight 11-0	J Culloty	—
5	3	**New Bird** (17) D Nicholson 11-0	R Johnson	●90
6		**Red Bordeaux** (F74) J Akehurst 11-0	C Llewellyn	—
7		**Super-Gem** (F98) J Wainwright 11-0	A Thornton	—
8	6	**Temeraire** (16) R Ingram 11-0	L Aspell	84
9	4	**Amoroso** (17) N Henderson 10-9	J R Kavanagh	85

Betting: 15–8 New Bird, 5–2 Trailside, 7–2 Amoroso, 8–1 Red Bordeaux, 14–1 Mystery Guest, Temeraire, 16–1 Jamoria Dancer, Super-Gem, 20–1 Dancing Dervish.

FORM GUIDE – **Trailside:** Always prominent, led flat, driven out, won by 1l from Sheergazer at Newbury 2m nov hdle, Gd. **Dancing Dervish:** Chased leaders, ridden along over 2f out, soon lost touch, 17th of 20, 18l behind Onefortheditch at Leicester 1m stks, Gd-Fm. **Jamoria Dancer:** Behind final 3f, 22nd of 26, 17l behind Saligo at York 1m1f hcap, Gd. **Mystery Guest:** Prominent far side over 4f, 16th of 19, 31l behind Onefortheditch at Leicester 1m stks, Gd-Sft. **New Bird:** Held up, hit 5th, headway after 3 out, weakened last, 3rd of 6, 17l behind Tom Paddington, with Amoroso (rec 5lb) 4th, btn 28l, at Cheltenham 2m 1f nov hdle, Gd-Sft. **Red Bordeaux:** Tracked leaders, effort over 3f out, led over 1f out, drew clear final furlong, won by 3l from Memphis Dancer at Catterick 1m4f mdn, Gd-Sft. **Super-Gem:** Prominent 6f, 14th of 22, 14l behind Marske Machine at Newmarket 1m1f app hcap, Gd-Sft. **Temeraire:** Chased leaders, ridden 3 out, weakened 2 out, 6th of 9, 36l behind Hors La Loi II at Lingfield 2m hdle, Sft.

1.45 PERTEMPS NETWORK HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 5f £5,378 (7 declared) — CH4

1	/22P-0	**Telmeia** (47) (D) H Daly 7-12-0	R Johnson	—
2	23-135	**Simons Castle** (23) R O'Sullivan 5-11-1	C Llewellyn	88
3	-U3121	**World Express** (11) (D) B Millman 8-11-0	D Salter (3)	●90
4	14101-	**Kings Measure** (256) J Jefferson 5-11-0	L Wyer	89
5	3 6146	**Red Raja** (36) P Bastiman 5-10-12	L Corcoran (7)	87
6	04-P71	**Pealings** (9) (D) G Hubbard 6-10-6	A Thornton	86
7	0/4P5	**Allez Wijins** (256) (D) N Henderson 9-10-0	J R Kavanagh	84

Betting: 2–1 World Express, 5–1 Kings Measure, 7–2 Pealings, 11–2 Simons Castle, 8–1 Telmeia, 10–1 Red Raja, 14–1 Allez Wijins.

FORM GUIDE – **Telmeia:** Held up, ridden 8th, soon weakened, tailed off, 7th of 9, well behind Ela Agapi Mou at Newbury 2m5f hcap hdle, Gd-Sft. **Simons Castle:** Behind when mistake 3rd, ridden and headway 7 out, one pace, 5th of 14 behind Polar Prospect at Sandown 2m hcap hdle, Gd. **World Express:** Held up, held on, headway to lead 4th, made rest, quickened well clear approaching last, won by 15l from Harry at Exeter 2m1f hcap hdle, Sft. **Kings Measure:** Tracked leaders, steady headway 4 out, disputed lead 3 out, led and blundered 2 out, kept on well flat, won by 3l from Zander at Ayr 2m4f hcap hdle, Gd. **Red Raja:** Always prominent, hard ridden approaching 2 out, one pace, 6th of 12, 8l behind Dashing Dollar at Windsor 2m6f hcap hdle, Gd. **Pealings:** Chased leader, led after 7th, hard ridden approaching last, clear run-in, won by 13l from Potter Prospect at Uttoxeter 2m4f hcap hdle, Hvy. **Allez Wijins:** Jumped right, led until 3 out, 5th and beaten when hampered 2 out, 5th of 9, 23l behind Spendid at Cheltenham 2m5f hcap hdle, Hvy.

2.20 PERTEMPS CHRISTMAS HURDLE
2m £25,575 (5 declared) — CH4

1	/10-1F	**Dato Star** (16) (D) (BF) J Jefferson 7-11-7	L Wyer	●90
2	111-P2	**French Holly** (30) (D) F Murphy 7-11-7	A Thornton	88
3	120 34	**Kerawi** (30) (CD) (BF) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-7	C Llewellyn	86
4	122-23	**Master Beveled** (29) (D) P Evans 8-11-7	R Thornton	84
5	-1113F	**Wakeel** (51) (D) M Pitman 6-11-7	R Johnson	85

Betting: 10–11 Dato Star, 9–4 French Holly, 6–1 Kerawi, 8–1 Master Beveled, 20–1 Wakeel.

FORM GUIDE – **Dato Star:** Chased leader until stumbled and left 4 out in race won by Rafeel at Cheltenham 2m1f hdle, Gd-Sft. **French Holly:** Tracked leaders, effort approaching 3 out, stayed on well, no impression, 2nd of 6, 5l behind Dato Star (levels) at Newcastle 2m hdle, Gd-Sft. **Kerawi:** Held up, mistake 4th, mistake and ridden 8th, one pace, 4th of 7, 13l behind Joyush at Ascot 2m4f hdle, Gd-Sft. **Master Beveled:** Tracked leaders, every chance 3 out, kept on one pace, 3rd of 6, 7l behind Istabraq at Fairyhouse 2m4f hdle, Gd-Sft. **Wakeel:** Held up, ridden and disputing poor 2nd when left 2 out in race won by Grey Shot at Wincanton 2m hcap hdle, Gd.

2.55 PERTEMPS EXECUTIVE HANDICAP CHASE
3m £7,213 (4 declared) — CH4

1	5F-634	**Dr Leunt** (16) (D) P Hobbs 7-11-10	A Thornton	87
2	5/3-24	**Cavillrow** (25) Miss H Knight 8-11-9	J Culloty	88
3	3/3UF2	**Time Won't Wait** (29) (C) R Phillips 9-11-7	C Llewellyn	●90
4	211-41	**Lancastrian Jet** (23) (D) H Daly 7-11-0	R Johnson	88

Betting: 11–8 Dr Leunt, 5–2 Lancastrian Jet, 7–2 Cavillrow, 9–2 Time Won't Wait

FORM GUIDE – **Dr Leunt:** Chased winner until 3 out, ran on one pace from 2 out, 4th of 13, 10l behind Northern Starlight at Cheltenham 2m5f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **Cavillrow:** Led to 4th, mistake and lost place 8th, rallied 3 out, blundered next, soon beaten, last of 4, well behind Copeland at Leicester 2m4f nov ch, Gd. **Time Won't Wait:** Held up, led approaching 11th until mistake and hearted 3 out, soon weakened, 2nd of 6, 23l behind Scaw at Plumpton 2m5f hcap ch, Gd-Sft. **Lancastrian Jet:** Held up, headway 8th, tracked leader from 10th until led 2 out, ridden out, won by 2l from Master Chat at Towcester 3m1f hcap ch, Sft.

3.25 LT. RECRUITMENT NETWORK HANDICAP CHASE
2m 4f 110yds £10,172 (3 declared)

1	F151-2	**Big Matt** (38) (CD) N Henderson 10-11-10	J R Kavanagh	●90
2	-21220	**Chief's Song** (23) (C) S Dow 8-11-0	C Llewellyn	87
3	31132-	**Even Flow** (264) (CD) T Casey 9-10-12	A Thornton	89

Betting: 5–6 Big Matt, 15–8 Even Flow, 7–2 Chief's Song.

Wetherby runners and riders

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
1.00	Simply Gifted	Simply Gifted
1.30	Out By Night	Master Wood
2.00	The Butterwick Kid	Great Easeby
2.35	Direct Route	Lake Kariba
3.05	River Don	Birkdale
3.35	Donnybrook	Ferrers

Left-handed circuit of 1½m with 200yds run-in which is slightly uphill. A fair course which suits the long-striding galloper.
Going: Soft. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Seven-day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: 3.35 Smart Boy. **Visored:** None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing.
F.Flat.

1.00 BRADFORD JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE 3YO
2m £3,008 (13 declared)

1	1F2	**Simply Gifted** (44) (CD) T Easterby 11-4	R Garritty	●90
2	3P	**Bhutan** (14) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 10-12	P Niven	84
3	PP	**Cottered King** (16) M W Easterby 10-12	G Lee ★	—
4	32	**Dangerman** (30) M W Easterby 10-12	C McCormack (3)	87
5		**Eco Friendly** (F50) B Hills 10-12	J Osborne	—
6	4	**Empire Gold** (48) A Turnell 10-12	L Harvey	86
7		**Ilahabad** (F73) J FitzGerald 10-12	A Dobbin	—
8	2	**Master Tern** (41) J J O'Neill 10-12	R McGrath	85
9		**Night Fighter** (F160) N Mason 10-12	B Guest	—
10		**Sinkit** (F61) E W Tuer 10-12	K Johnson	—
11		**The Castle Bomer** (F35) M W Easterby 10-12	F Leahy	—
12		**Bouge** (F247) J Leigh 10-7	B Harding	—
13		**Ballorra** (F72) Miss S Hall 10-7	S Durack	—

Betting: 7–4 Simply Gifted, 9–2 Eco Friendly, 6–1 Master Tern, 13–2 Bhutan, 8–1 Ilahabad, 10–1 Dangerman, Empire Gold.

1.30 HARRY WHARTON NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE
2m 4f 110yds £3,716 (8 declared)

1	P4111F	**Master Wood** (14) (CD) (BF) C Grant 7-11-12	C McCormack (3)	●90
2	632/1-	**Banker Count** (422) (C) M W Easterby 6-11-12	R Garritty	—
3	1P12/U	**B The One** (23) J J Quinn 7-11-7	P Niven	—
4	1/PP-6	**Carley Lad** (32) N Mason 10-11-2	R Guest	—
5	13-P36	**Dalas Bay** (36) (C) M W Easterby 4-10-4	F Leahy	—
6	-46025	**Leap In The Dark** (14) (D) Miss L Siddall 9-10-1	T Siddall (5)	86
7	U2-3F2	**Out By Night** (31) (BF) G M Moore 7-10-0	B Harding	88
8	20-605	**Inch Way** (23) J J O'Neill 6-10-0	R McGrath	84

Betting: 6–4 Master Wood, 3–1 Banker Count, 9–2 B The One, 7–1 Out By Night, 16–1 Carley Lad, Dalas Bay, Leap In The Dark, Inch Way.

2.00 LONG MARSTON HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 7f £4,949 (6 declared)

1	226F-P	**Great Easeby** (14) (BF) W Storey 8-12-0	R McGrath	●90
2	112-01	**Tasalrol** (19) C Egerton 4-11-7	J Osborne ★	89
3	11-45	**For Cathal** (21) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 7-10-11	P Niven	87
4	2/2-10	**Prelude To Fame** (11) Mrs K Milligan 5-10-7	F Leahy	88
5	2134-4	**The Butterwick Kid** (43) R Fahey 5-10-6	A Dobbin	86
6	/11-4P	**Bridle Path** (11) (D) T Easterby 7-10-1	J Tizzard	—

Betting: 9–4 Tasalrol, 3–1 For Cathal, Prelude To Fame, 13–2 Great Easeby, 7–1 The Butterwick Kid, 8–1 Bridle Path.

2.35 CASTLEFORD CHASE LIMITED HANDICAP
2m £18,328 (5 declared)

1	F11-21	**Direct Route** (23) (CD) J Howard Johnson 7-11-10	A Dobbin	89
2	11 215	**Lake Kariba** (23) (D) P Nicholls 7-11-8	J Tizzard	●90
3	3525 1	**Flying Instructor** (16) (D) P R Webber 8-10-9	J Osborne	86
4	4352-6	**Lord Dorcet** (68) (CD) J Charlton 8-10-7	B Storey	88
5	424034	**Cumbrian Challenge** (2) (CD) T Easterby 9-10-3	R McGrath	88

Betting: 9–4 Flying Instructor, 5–2 Lake Kariba, 11–4 Direct Route, 9–2 Lord Dorcet, 10–1 Cumbrian Challenge

3.05 APPLETON ROEBUCK NOVICE CHASE
3m 1f £3,756 (7 declared)

1	4B 1U3	**Ardent Scout** (27) (C) Mrs S Smith 6-11-6	S Durack	87
2	11P-21	**Birkdale** (28) (D) L Lungo 7-11-6	R Supple	●90
3	1F-2h	**Master Nova** (45) Mrs J A Camacho 8-11-6	P Niven	88
4	/6-321	**River Don** (12) (D) M W Easterby 6-11-6	R Garritty	84
5	/2 2F2	**Bobby Grant** (27) (C) C Grant 7-11-0	C McCormack (3)	88
6	/0P-FU	**King Pin** (28) P Beaumont 6-11-0	B Grattan (5)	—
7	U3 113	**Radiation** (18) (D) J J O'Neill 5-10-13	R McGrath	—

Betting: 11–4 Birkdale, 5–1 Master Nova, River Don, Bobby Grant, 6–1 Ardent Scout, King Pin, 7–1 Radiation.

3.35 BRAMHAM NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE
2m £2,933 (7 declared)

1	2/0-12	**Ferrers** (10) (D) Mrs P Sly 7-11-10	O McPhail (5)	●90
2	21	**Classical Dance** (28) (D) Mrs M Reveley 4-11-6	G Lee	88
3	51144	**Donnybrook** (16) (CD) R Woodhouse 5-11-5	B Grattan (5)	89
4	0-0035	**Faru** (23) P R Webber 6-11-0	J Osborne	87
5	2210	**Smart Boy** (14) M Hetty 4-10-12	A Dobbin ★	86
6	060	**Billy Nomaite** (14) Mrs S Smith 4-10-4	Mr J Crowley (5)	83
7	F0PP0-	**Chan Move** (249) W Smith 6-10-0	S Taylor ★	—

Betting: 5–2 Classical Dance, 3–1 Ferrers, 4–1 Smart Boy, 6–1 Donnybrook, 7–1 Faru, Billy Nomaite, 25–1 Chan Move.

Leicester off

TODAY'S scheduled meeting at rain-hit Leicester was called off yesterday morning due to waterlogging.

Clerk of the course Nick Lees said: "The hurdles course is absolutely sodden. I just hope it eventually dries out for our meeting on New Year's Day."

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Cricket

Australia's latest find out to prove he can last the pace

Paul Allott assesses the career and debut of the long-suffering Matthew Nicholson

IT IS unusual even for an Australian to be awarded the "baggy green cap" when he has played only seven games of first-class cricket.

The circumstances surrounding Matthew Nicholson's entry into the Test match arena could hardly be more bizarre. A classic scenario of right place, right time, has promoted him but there is far more to it than that.

Injuries to two key reserve bowlers, Mike Kasprowicz and Paul Reiffel, as well as Jason Gillespie, meant the Australian selectors were searching for a new man. A touch of inspiration and a gut feeling propelled them towards Nicholson on the strength of two useful attributes: he bowls fast; and he has performed admirably against England already, taking seven for 77 at Perth as well as putting Mark Butcher out of that game with a split forehead.

The call to Nicholson came as he was boarding a plane from Perth to Brisbane to spend Christmas with his folks. Surfboard and golf clubs were replaced by cricket kit and Melbourne became his destination.

To appreciate just how remarkable his elevation to Test status has been one needs to examine his recent past. Five years ago at Under-19 level he was Australia's player of the year but soon afterwards his confidence received a dent. He was told by New South Wales he was not going to make the grade, so he took off to Perth to try his luck with Western Australia.

It has taken him until this season to establish himself with WA, not because of lack of hard work or talent — in addition he has had Dennis Lillee to oversee his preparation — but because a series of debilitating illnesses struck him down.

For two years he has suffered in nightmare proportions; there was an initial bout of salmonella poisoning which weakened him and was followed by glandular fever. He then had a bout of Ross River fever, a mosquito-born virus not dissimilar to malaria in its symptoms, and, if this were not enough, the continual weakening effects then lead to chronic fatigue syndrome which left him without energy and exhausted by the slightest exertion.

Obviously Nicholson has recovered but he still has to control the effects of his various ailments with a carefully planned fitness regime and with the aid of a diet that excludes all alcohol, red meat and dairy produce. He admits to still having spells when his energy levels are low but he is confident that the worst effects are behind him.

He now has a new challenge as one of Australia's premier seam bowlers and his first day at the office could have gone better. Picked for his pace, he rarely troubled any England batsman with it and ended by conceding a run a ball. His only consolation was the prized first Test wicket of Nasser Hussain.

Conditions were ideal for seam bowling at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and Glenn McGrath showed his young pretender a thing or two by ripping out Mike Atherton and Mark Butcher before they had time to digest their breakfast.

McGrath is without doubt the finished article, the target of Nicholson's dreams. Hard work will be required if he is to attain his goal, a more consistent line is essential and the ability to sustain his pace throughout the day.

Allan Border, now an Australian selector, was encouraged by Nicholson's performance saying: "He is a young, raw, quick bowler in the making and it was a good effort by someone so inexperienced."

Nicholson has borne his recent illnesses with great fortitude and is being handed a chance to fast-track to being a Test-match regular. He has already shown great strength of character in his personal life; he has proved he is a battler. Now he has to prove he is a bowler as well.



Only way is up . . . Matthew Nicholson bouncing back



Blossom time . . . Franklyn Rose celebrates Jacques Kallis being caught behind for 11 runs PHOTOGRAPH: ADIL BRADLOW

South Africa v West Indies: third Test, second day

Rose bowls career-best to restore pride to West Indies

Andy Capostagno sees a new-wave fast bowler brighten up Durban for the tourists

A CAREER-BEST performance by the fast bowler Franklyn Rose, though unlikely to save the West Indies from a series-concluding defeat, gave the tourists back some much-needed pride on the second day of the third Test against South Africa.

Rose took six wickets for 75 runs and was almost entirely responsible for restricting the home side to a first-innings lead of 94 with two wickets in hand.

The one South African to defy the Jamaican's pacy outswingers for a sustained period was Jonty Rhodes, who finished the day not out on 85 in a total of 292 for eight and will be responsible for extending the lead as far as possible on day three.

Play ended half an hour prematurely due to bad light, a decision which the umpires Russell Tiffin and Dave Orchard needed to think long and hard about since the Kingsmead floodlights had been on for some three hours by the time Rhodes and Allan Donald were offered the sanctuary of the pavilion.

The playing conditions for this series do not include the option of artificial lighting, but both teams agreed to its use before the first Test. Durban in December is a place of low cloud and sauna-like humidity. The good sense in allowing the floodlights to be used on both of the first two days has already saved between three and six hours of play being lost.

After a disappointing first-innings score of 198, the West Indies needed a good bowling performance and it came from an unexpected source. South Africa had only added 11 runs to their overnight 46 without loss when Rose had Herschelle Gibbs caught at short mid-wicket for 35. A double strike by Rose then reduced the hosts to 80 for three with Gary Kirsten caught in the slips for a workmanlike 26 and Jacques Kallis caught behind for 11.

In the afternoon session Courtney Walsh produced a snorter to bowl Hansie Cronje for 30 and then Rose accounted for Daryll Cullinan by firing in a throw from the third-man boundary to run him out by millimetres for a well-constructed 40. That reduced South Africa to 182 for five, at which point, as usual, the innings began in earnest.

Shaun Pollock underlined his status as the world's premier all-rounder in a stand of 80 for the sixth wicket with Rhodes. Pollock has taken 64 wickets in 14 Tests in 1998 and his 30 runs at Kingsmead raised his run aggregate close to 600 in the same period. It took a flying, one-handed catch by Carl Hooper at second slip that reminded a few of us of another great all-rounder, Ian Botham, to remove Pollock for 30.

The bowler, inevitably, was Rose, who had impressed his captain so much that Brian Lara entrusted him with the second new ball ahead of the lethargic Curtly Ambrose. Rose responded with a second three-wicket spell, bowling Mark Boucher for a third-ball duck with a magnificent delivery and sneaking another between the pads of Pat Symcox shortly before the close.

In between Rose's prodigious feats, Rhodes kept South Africa ahead with brilliant stroke play. He twice hit Ambrose over mid-wicket for six and has eight fours in an innings which has so far lasted 123 balls.

But the last word should go to Rose who took six for 100 on his Test debut against India two years ago but subsequently lost his way. He said: "People say fast bowling in the West Indies is dying, but Nixon McLean, Mervyn Dillon, Reon King and myself hope that we can stand in the footprints of the great fast bowlers who have gone before."

Now the tourists must hope for a similar renaissance with the bat in order to keep the series alive.

Scoreboard

WEST INDIES
First Innings

P A Wallace c Cullinan b Kallis	21
J R Murray lbw b Terbrugge	29
S Chanderpaul c Boucher b Kallis	4
*B C Lara c Cronje b Terbrugge	51
C L Hooper c Cullinan b Kallis	10
D Ganga b Pollock	23
†R D Jacobs b Cronje	39
R Lewis c Cullinan b Cronje	0
F A Rose c Kallis b Cronje	6
C E L Ambrose run out	0
C A Walsh not out	0
Extras (lb 5, nb 5)	10
Total (71.1 overs)	198

Fall of wickets: 60, 92, 57, 105, 133, 178, 179, 185, 186.
Bowling: Donald 13.4–1–55–0; Pollock 23.2–9–45–1; Terbrugge 12–2–36–2; Kallis 10–3–18–3; Symcox 8–1–17–0; Cronje 4.1–0–19–3.

SOUTH AFRICA
First Innings

G Kirsten c Hooper b Rose	26
H H Gibbs c Wallace b Rose	35
J H Kallis c Jacobs b Rose	11
D J Cullinan run out	40
*W J Cronje b Walsh	30
J N Rhodes not out	85
S M Pollock c Hooper b Rose	30
†M V Boucher b Rose	0
P L Symcox b Rose	12
A A Donald not out	1
Extras (b4, lb5, nb12, w1)	22
Total (for 8, 83.2 overs)	292

Fall of wickets: 57, 79, 80, 140, 182, 262, 282, 284.
To bat: D J Terbrugge.
Bowling: Ambrose 17–1–60–0; Walsh 27–6–80–1; Rose 25.2–6–75–6; Lewis 20–2–70–0; Hooper 4–0–18–0.
Umpires: R Tiffin, D Orchard.

New Zealand v India: second Test

NZ tail wags to set up healthy margin

AN UNBROKEN stand of 82 for the eighth wicket lifted New Zealand to a strong position after the second day of the Test match at Basin Reserve, Wellington.

The pace bowler Dion Nash was unbeaten with 56, which equalled his previous highest Test score, against England at Lord's in 1994: Daniel Vettori, the left-arm spinner, was on 35.

The pair put on 81 in the last session yesterday to bring the host side to 290 for seven, giving them a lead of 82 runs. They survived the second ball and several short-pitched balls by Javagal Srinath, who bowled his heart out for little reward.

The New Zealand coach Steve Rixon was delighted with the partnership. "A lead of 150 would be ideal, but we'll be happy with what we get and we certainly won't try and grind out runs. We will play positively."

India, who were bowled out for 208, took three wickets in the space of 17 runs in the afternoon session, reducing New Zealand from 132 for three at lunch to 179 for six. The innings was held together in this period by Nathan Astle, who made a fighting 56.

Anil Kumble, who bowled tirelessly and accurately on a pitch which gave him little assistance, prised Astle out in the second to last over before tea, spinning a googly between bat and pad.

Nash and Vettori then took advantage of a tired attack. "Nash has worked on his on-side shots for the last year and he enjoyed using his new toy," Rixon said.

New Zealand started the day at 52 for one. Matthew Horne and Stephen Fleming worked diligently to provide a solid foundation.

Fleming was playing fluently and asserting himself when he was run out for 42. Horne and, later, Astle were more circumspect.

India twice dropped Horne off Venkatesh Prasad and while the misses did not cost many runs, Horne's subsequent innings subjected the attack to extra toil. Limited bowling resources meant the misses were damaging.

INDIA
First Innings

N S Sidhu c Fleming b Doull	0
A D Jadeja lbw b Doull	10
R S Dravid lbw b Doull	0
S C Ganguly c Parore b Doull	5
S R Tendulkar c Bell b Doull	47
*M Azharuddin not out	103
†N R Mongia c Astle b Doull	0
A Kumble c McMillan b Doull	11
J Srinath c Fleming b Nash	7
V B K Prasad c Fleming b Vettori	15
Harbhajan Singh c Astle b McMillan	1
Extras (lb3, nb5)	9
Total (65.4 overs)	208

Fall of wickets: 0, 2, 15, 16, 99, 99, 132, 149, 207.
Bowling: Doull 24–7–65–7; Cairns 17–3–68–0; Nash 14–1–46–1; Vettori 7–0–20–1; Astle 2–0–5–0; McMillan 1.4–1–0–1.

NEW ZEALAND
First Innings

M D Bell c Mongia b Prasad	4
M J Horne b Kumble	28
*S P Fleming run out	42
N J Astle b Kumble	56
C D McMillan c Dravid b Srinath	24
†A C Parore lbw Kumble	2
C L Cairns c Tendulkar b Prasad	3
D J Nash not out	56
D L Vettori not out	35
Extras (lb17, b8, nb5)	30
Total (for 7, 112 overs)	290

Fall of wickets: 7, 79, 112, 182, 172, 179, 208.
Bowling: Srinath 30–4–81–1; Prasad 25–6–57–2; Kumble 37–14–67–3; H Singh 15–3–47–0; Ganguly 5–0–13–0.

This is one series our lads have all sewn up

AS USUAL, Stewie had it about right when he said that this tour has been a swings-and-roundabouts situation and so far we've found ourselves on the wrong end of them.

Pod would go further and describe it as a switchback ride with no toffee apple at the end of it for the English cricket supporter.

But irregardless of results on the pitch or the destination of the Ashes, the fans have always been able to comfort themselves with the certainty that when it comes to fancy dress, there isn't a team on the planet that can live with us.

Christmas Day after Christmas Day, not only in this century but stretching back into the last one, England tourists have established a novelty-costume supremacy unrivalled in the annals of sport.

Take a walk through the MCG museum here in Melbourne and you enter a heritage time warp. It's all here — from the crinoline worn by Sir W G Grace in the first-ever competition to the mini-skirt in which Ken Barrington carried all before him as Lulu in 1965/6 (and this after putting Graham McKenzie to the sword all day on an Adelaide greentop).

Being on their first tour, some of the younger players like Alex Tudor and Ben Hollioake have obviously never taken part in the competition before, so Dave Podmore was entrusted with the task of taking them round the museum to both give them a bit of a history lesson and point them in the right direction regarding what to wear.

The lads were gobsmacked to discover that, for example, in the era before Kerry Packer revolutionised the game, a professional cricketer was expected not only to pay for his



costume himself but also to make it. This could take five or six weeks — the entire length of the sea voyage from Blighty to Down Under — and was the cause of many a notorious contretemps.

Geoff Boycott's absence from the Test arena in the Seventies was a case in point. Geoff had sat up night after night applying lacquer to his loon pants only to discover that Mike Denness had also decided to go as David Bowie. The skipper pulled rank with the result that Boycs refused to wear so much as a sequin in anger for three years.

That's not to say that the modern player has it easy. If anything, the pressure to produce the goods after the Christmas dinner is greater than ever. Look at Graeme Hick. Brilliant performer at children's party level but quite honestly that Fred Flintstone outfit he turned up in the last time round . . . well, I'm sorry but it was like watching a rabbit in car headlights.

There has probably never been a fancy-dress competition as meticulously prepared for as this year's. Nothing was left to chance. Mike Brearley (a famous Bo Derek in his day) had even been roped in as costume psychologist. Morale was sky-bloody-high.

All was going swimmingly until our wonderful politicians back home decided to play toy soldiers.

With the launch of operation Desert Fox, it's fair to say that the England tour party's world caved in. Stewie put his foot down, ruling out half the costumes on grounds of bad taste, in view of the risks being taken by our brave airmen in the skies above Baghdad.

All very fine and patriotic. Tally-ho chaps etc. But try telling that to Athers who was going as Ali Baba, as was Heggy and Wayne Morton, the physio. Pod himself was considered unfortunate, Lawrence of Arabia being very much a borderline case. And of course bang went Nass Hussain's chance of fancy dress glory, going as his namesake Saddam.

We're beginning to wonder if that guy's luck will ever change.

With the team so depleted by the towel-head embargo, the clever money was obviously on Mark Butcher. Butch is a bit of an Audrey Hepburn buff, has been since he was in the Surrey under-14s. He's got all the skinny lass's videos and knows every word of dialogue from Breakfast At Tiffany's. Pity the poor sod who has to sit next to him on the plane.

Anyway, what with the little black dress and the string of pearls, Butch reckoned he had the No. 1 spot sewn up. But he hadn't bargained for Robert Croft putting together one of the most brilliant disguises of all time and coming as a spin bowler.

So, at the end of the day, at least some of the lads were able to do justice to the very high standards which they set themselves, and as usual our Aussie hosts never had a price costume-wise. Well, six Babes and five Priscilla Queen of the Deserts — talk about clueless.

In any case, we knew exactly what they'd be wearing: Mark Waugh tipped us off weeks ago.

Australia rejects Subcontinent call for life bans

AUSTRALIAN officials have rejected a proposal from the Subcontinent that Shane Warne and Mark Waugh should be banned for life for taking money from an illegal bookmaker.

The Australian Cricket Board chief executive officer Mal Speed said the pair could not be banned because they had been punished and the matter was officially closed.

Speed was responding to an announcement by the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Khalid Mahmood that his board and those of India and Sri Lanka wanted the International Cricket Council to introduce life bans for those involved in illegal betting on matches.

Waugh and Warne have admitted taking money during a limited-overs tournament in Sri Lanka in 1994 but deny any involvement in match-fixing.

Mahmood said the proposal would be raised at the meeting of ICC executive board members in Christchurch, New Zealand, next month.

The ACB announced last week it would conduct its own inquiry into match-fixing after several players said they had been approached by bookmakers.

Basketball

Storm prevail amid curses

Christian Bright

DERBY STORM yesterday closed the gap on the leading contenders in the Budweiser League. Manchester Giants and Sheffield Sharks, by holding out Milton Keynes Lions in a controversial clash.

The Derby coach Bob Donewald incurred a technical foul for obscenities and the Milton Keynes owner Vince Macanlay Razaq produced a tirade of his own after seeing his team's recovery from a deficit of 20 points undermined by the fact that four of his players were on four fouls.

The quartet — Broderick Bobb, Richard Scantlebury, Tony Windless and Michael Martin — bowed out in the last 38 seconds of the 81–77 defeat.

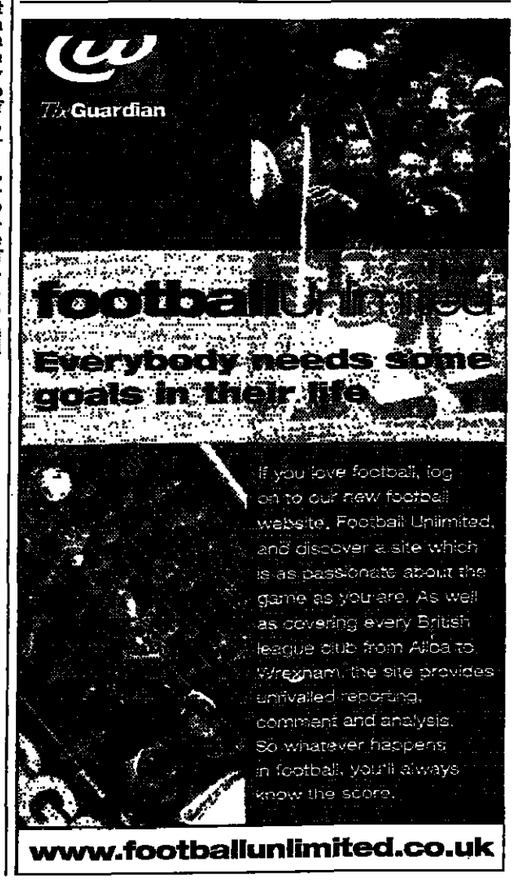
"The circus that follows Donewald around works in his favour," Macanlay Razaq said. "The referees ended up calling intentional fouls on our players defensively so they are seen to be calling it fair on both sides. This stops them getting a mouthful from Bob."

There was little between the teams until an 18–3 onslaught from the Storm took them to a 46–33 interval lead.

Derby improved their lead after the restart, with a basket from Yorick Williams, the most recent recruit to the England squad, a three-pointer from Nate Reinking on his way to 19 points, and two free throws from Joel Burns stretching the advantage to 53–38.

By then Donewald had calmed down. The referee Mac Callender explained the coach's foul: "He was using expletives with women and children just behind him in the crowd. Everybody could hear what he said."

Sheffield Sharks added spice to the title battle by defeating Manchester Giants 85–83 in a Uni-ball Trophy tie.



Rugby Union

Premiership One: Saracens 7 London Scottish 24

Glittering Irving harries Sarries

Robert Armstrong

BARRY IRVING, an 18-year-old Scottish Colts fly-half, celebrated his league debut with an inspirational display that propelled the Exiles to only their fourth Premiership win of the season at Vicarage Road yesterday.

Long before the end the precociously gifted Irving had stunned the 10,237 crowd with a glittering repertoire of skills embellished by an opportunist try that sealed the win and blew Saracens off course in the title race.

The no-nonsense manner in which Scottish scored three of the game's four tries — Kenny Milligan and Mick Watson also crossed the line — underlined their commitment to attacking football albeit in rainswept conditions. Saracens, who lost both their halfbacks with injuries, were a pale shadow of the side that put 58 points on the Exiles in September: this will certainly please the leaders Leicester and Northampton.

"Barry has a good temperament plus the confidence to make a break," said John Steele, the Scottish director of rugby who picked the teenager because Jannie de Beer withdrew injured. "We knew a big win would come after we'd suffered the frustration of several narrow defeats — it was just a matter of when. I believe we're the best defensive side in the Premiership — now we've proved we can score tries."

Saracens, who led 7-3 at half-time against the run of play, never came to terms with the Exiles' enterprise in turning defence into attack, especially in the second half when the hosts looked off the pace. Francois Pienaar, Saracens' player-coach admitted: "When you are the hunter it's easy but today we got hunted and that's a lot more difficult. We lost our shape and we were outmuscled."

Scottish certainly dispelled any notion that they are automatic candidates for relegation. Thrustful first-time tackling always made it difficult for lethargic Saracens to cross the gain line and on the rare occasions when the hosts did advance deep the impressive Irving promptly relieved the pressure with a searching touch-finder.



Born to run . . . Fly-half Barry Irving takes on Saracens' George Chuter during his audacious debut for London Scottish at Vicarage Road DAVID ROGERS

Saracens' faltering attempts to generate momentum were upset early on by the loss of Kyran Bracken, helped off dazed after a head-on collision with the big Scottish wing Conan Sharman, and at the start of the second half when Alain Penaud had to go off with a dead leg. The reshuffle saw Gavin Johnson switch from full-back to No. 10 and Matt Singer come off the bench to fill the vacancy.

Scottish worked hard to exploit Saracens subsequent loss of rhythm. Sharman ought to have put them in front when he dispossessed Richard Wallace but his kick down the left touchline overran the dead-ball line. Late in the first half Irving made a coruscating midfield break only to be stopped metres short by Simon Ravenscroft's crunching tackle.

Given the lengthy period Saracens needed to get the line-out sorted out, not to mention the lack of straight running among their backs, they were fortunate to go in front thanks to a 31st-minute try by Brendon Daniel. A pacy long-range break by Ryan Constable, halted by Guy Easterby, set up the ruck on the left from which Tony Diprose fired out a slick pass to Daniel: the industrious Kiwi wing still had work to do, side-stepping a defender before he accelerated 15 metres to score close to the posts.

However, Scottish served notice that they had no intention of rolling over, driving down the right flank to win a penalty for offside. Iain McAusland coolly kicked the goal from 25 metres and, suitably encouraged, the Exiles grabbed the lead with a 46th-minute try by Milligan. A careless pass by Johnson resulted in a controlled counter-attack from halfway that culminated in the wing scoring at the posts.

In the last 10 minutes Scottish crowned the impressive work of their forwards with two more tries to which Saracens had no answer. First, Irving gathered from a ruck on the right, feinted to go outside then switched back before scampering through. Near the end the co-ordinated handling of Easterby, Ron Eriksson and Rob Hunter presented Watson with the chance to rumble over for a short-range try. It was the final indignity for a Saracens outfit that had all but collapsed.

Saracens: Try: Daniel. **Conversions:** Johnson. **London Scottish: Tries:** Milligan, Irving, Watson. **Conversions:** McAusland 3. **Penalty:** McAusland.
Saracens: Johnson; Daniel, Constable, Ravenscroft, R Wallace; Penaud (Singer, 41min), Bracken (Free, 3); Fleetman, Chuter, P Wallace, Johns, Crewcock, Coker, Pienaar (capt), Diprose.
London Scottish: McAusland; Milligan, Bonney, Eriksson, Sharman; Irving, Easterby; Johnstone, Rudkin, Burnell, Jones, Watson, Fenn, Holmes (capt), Hunter.
Referee: R Goodfife (Yorkshire).

Leicester 26 Bedford 0

Tigers enjoy sweet smell of success

Hugh Godwin sees Goliath show David no mercy as misery piles up for Bedford

IF Bedford's players flopped into their Saturday night armchairs seeking a little light relief they may have identified with the subtitle of the late film, *The Smell Of Fear*.

Yet sniff the air around the relegation-threatened club's director of rugby Rudi Straeuli and you would struggle to pick up the scent of real discomfort. True, Straeuli did talk of "banging our heads against a wall", but only while the club's employees wait for January 11, the hearing date for Frank Warren's protracted High Court case against Don King.

Assuming no further adjournment, Warren's assets should be unfrozen whatever the verdict, leaving him free either to plough on with his 90 per cent stake at Goldington Road or accept an offer and move out.

The club's director of business Tim Crow took a swipe at those who use the "troubled Bedford" tag too freely. "There are Premiership One clubs out there who are losing more money in a month than we will this season," he said. "What we don't have is a guy making up the balance out of his own pocket."

By contrast, Leicester are up near the summit of the cash mountain. A healthy crowd of almost 11,000 watched The Tigers open a two-point lead in the Premiership and they expect 15,000 for the Barbarians match at Welford Road tomorrow.

With the match outcome never in doubt, it was left to the identity of the first try scorer to provide controversy.

Austin Healey, a 14-1 chance, emerged from the pile-up of a lineout drive on the half hour to leave the scribes dutifully noting "Try: Healey". Not so. The public address chucklingly announced "a stewards' enquiry" and, within minutes, Neil Back had been awarded the score.

There was no doubt whatsoever about Leicester's right to victory. Their defence, lambasted by captain and coach after recent generosity, was superb. One crunching tackle by Jon Stuart on Junior Paramore summed up the performance.

A repeat catch-and-drive try, Richard Cockerill this time finding the point of least resistance, had Leicester 16 points up at the interval after two earlier penalty goals from Tim Stimpson.

The full-back clipped over a penalty and a conversion in the second half, too, with the winger Dave Lougheed bludgeoning through for the Tigers' third try.

Forthcoming fixtures against the Baa-baa's, Cardiff and Barking (Joel Stransky's proposed comeback game) will give Leicester time to regroup before the visit of London Scottish in the Premiership. Few would bet against a home win.

SCORERS: Leicester: Tries: Back, Cockerill, Lougheed. **Conversions:** Stimpson. **Penalties:** Stimpson 3.
Leicester: Stimpson; Lloyd (Horak, 65min), Potter, Howard (Stuart, 48), Lougheed; Murphy, Healey; Rowntree, Cockerill, Garforth (Jelley, 59), Johnson (capt), Van Heerden (Fletcher, 69), Ewland, Back, Corry (Gadding, 78).
Bedford: Whetstone; Underwood, Murdoch (capt), Harris (Evans, 51); O'Mahony, Yapp, Elliott, Ozdemir, Richards, Hartland (Boyd, h-t), Swindlehurst (Cockle, 57), Murray, Winters, Forster, Paramore.
Referee: E Morrison (Bristol).

Richmond 13 London Irish 25

Exiles triumph by scavenging

Ian Malin

PERHAPS only a man who had played for Wellington Hurricanes could have kept his head in the eye of the storm that swirled around the Madejski Stadium.

Jarrod Cunningham's peerless place-kicking was the difference between these sides in Saturday's gale but the Exiles were really home and dry before the game had kicked off. Richmond, without six of their regular pack, never had enough ballast to cope with the buffeting they received from the London Irish forwards.

And so the team that finished last season in such buoyant fashion with six straight wins now see their title hopes disappear overboard. "There's no point deluding ourselves. This job is all about setting realistic goals and it will be difficult to win the title after losing six games," said Richmond's director of rugby John Kingston.

"Looking at it coldly, the difference was the place-kicking but there was more to it than that. They just had more of the ball. But I would defy even Northampton or Leicester to be competitive without five or six regular forwards and, when Adam Venter pulled out with flu just before Christmas, I almost had to laugh."

Kingston is hoping his captain Ben Clarke and fellow forwards Barry Williams, the latest addition to the walking wounded, and Craig Quinnell will be back for their next league encounter, at Gloucester on January 16. But he admits replacing Scott Quinnell, a recent departure to Llanelli, is a difficult task.

"Scott's loss has been compounded by all our injuries and we have been papering over the cracks. But it would be lunacy to bring in someone on a big contract when we don't even know what the structure of the season will be next season and if there will be club rugby between May and October."

Kingston's opposite number Dick Best has seen his multi-national side win four times on their travels this season. He calls his team "upwardly mobile" but admitted the acid test would be their next two games, against Newcastle this Saturday and at Northampton tomorrow week.

"The Newcastle game will be a brutal affair," he said. "But we were back to our scavenging, tenacious selves today."

Best says the initial plans for a two-tier British League which "dumped" his side in a second division along with Irish provinces, who have since spurned the scheme, have motivated his team, who are happy to travel west to Reading but not to Connacht.

Best was happy despite seeing Justin Bishop's first-half try disallowed for a marginal forward pass from Stephen Bachop and despite conceding two excellent tries to Richmond, through Agustin Pichot's darting run from a scrum and Matt Pini's injury-time consolation after Earl Va'a's clever up-and-under.

Irish's try by Rob Gallacher, battering over in a second-half rolling maul from a line-out, better summed up the match.

Amazingly the crowd of 9,621 who braved the elements was Richmond's biggest of the season. "There is hope for professional rugby when you get a crowd like that on a day like this," said Kingston, sounding like a man who had had a rotten Christmas but would still enjoy his New Year.

SCORERS: Richmond: Tries: Pichot, Pini. **Penalty:** Va'a. **London Irish: Try:** Gallacher. **Conversions:** Cunningham 3. **Penalties:** Cunningham 3.
Richmond: Pini; Wells, Bateman (Dixon, 78min), Wright, Brown; Va'a, Pichot (capt); McFarland (Powell, 76), Cuthbert, Davies, Cusack (Codling, 59), Gillies, Swift (Barlow, 62), Hutton, Cabannes.
London Irish: O'Shea (capt), Bishop, Burrows, Venter, Cunningham; Bachop, Putt (Campbell, 62); Hadley, Howe (Kirke, 48), Hardwick, Spicer, O'Kelly, Boar, Dawson, Gallacher (Fegurell, 69).
Referee: G Hughes (Manchester).

Wasps 23 Gloucester 9

Renaissance man Sampson lets his hair down

Robert Kitson sees Fidler unstrung again as a sorry sequence continues

RICHARD HILL can count Gloucester's away wins in the past two seasons on the fingers of one hand but, for the third time in 12 months, Wasps presented him with a nasty sting in the tail to crawl up to third place in the Premiership.

Leading 9-6 with three minutes of normal time left, even West Country pessimists were preparing a double-digit response to their acrimonious last-gasp 13-12 Kingsholm defeat in October. Instead the home side sprang to life with a penalty and converted tries by Paul Sampson and Andy Le Chevalier to inflict their opponents' ninth successive away defeat in this fixture, a league trot matched only by Harlequins' lack of success at Bath.

On their last visit to Loftus Road in January, a late penalty try ruined Gloucester's chances and their supporters were in the mood to lynch the referee Brian Campsall at Kingsholm three months ago when Will Green's injury-time try did the trick. This time their team scrummaged well and fought hard but still pulled up short. "It leaves a bit of a bitter taste," admitted the new captain Rob Fidler, more in sorrow than anger.

The painful sequence of events was kick-started by Kenny Logan's third successful penalty with 77 minutes gone, at which point both sides might have settled for a point in a less-than expansive contest. Wasps were being hammered in the tight but, with injury-time looming, Alex King's kick gave Sampson the chance to demonstrate his sprinting ability against Chris Catling and Rory Greenslade-Jones. When the ball bobbled loose over the line, it was the Yorkshireman who got there first.

Sampson has barely played since breaking an ankle jumping off a wall in Cape Town after the end of England's summer tour and will view his contribution as making up ground in every sense. By the time the replacement flanker le Chevalier scored his side's even later try, their director of rugby had already launched the search for positives.

"The way we battled I thought we deserved at least a point. We'll start to win games because the mental approach is right now. I'm confident about that," said Hill. "I'm not superstitious. I know at some stage that it will come right."

Hill's counterpart Nigel Melville was less impressed with his side's overall performance than relieved at the outcome. "For the majority of the match it did not look good," he said. "We are not particularly happy but we are improving.

"I'm delighted for Sampson in particular. He has regained most of his speed. He used to be able to run 100 metres in 10.4 seconds and is now working on recapturing that pace."

The dramatic finale drew a merciful veil over the first half, which drew white cards for Gloucester's Kingsley Jones and Mark Mapletoft and Paul Volley of Wasps. There was further bad Cherry and White news in the shape of calf and thigh injuries respectively to Kingsley Jones and Philippe Saint-André. Fidler, in charge "until further notice", may have to tackle Bath on Saturday without both of them.

SCORERS: Wasps: Tries: Sampson, Le Chevalier. **Conversions:** Logan 2. **Penalties:** Logan 3. **Gloucester: Penalties:** Mapletoft 2. Fanolua.
Wasps: Lewsey; Sampson, Scrase, Henderson, Logan; King, Wood; Molloy, Leota (Mitchell, 77min), Black (Le Chevalier, 52), Weedon (capt), Reed (Shaw, 52), Dallaglio, Volley, Worsley (Scrivener, 46).
Gloucester: Catling; Johnson, Fanolua, Tombs, Saint-André (Greenslade-Jones, 30); Mapletoft, Sanders (Benton, 65); Woodman, McCarthy, Deacon, Fidler (capt), Cornwell, Pearce, Jones (Carter, 61), Ojomoh (Sims, 65).
Referee: S Lander (Liverpool).

Harlequins 17 Sale 15

Quins escape late punishment

Michael Prestage

IT took a long time for both sides to shake off Christmas hangovers but a dreary game was enlivened by three tries and a nail-biting finish as Sale's Shane Howarth missed two match-winning kicks in the dying minutes.

John Mitchell, Sale's coach, is in the market for two players and one will be an experienced forward able to lead the pack. He said: "The players are well paid and they get information about the opposition. I get annoyed with their naivete and lack of leadership throughout this season."

His counterpart John Gallagher at least had the consolation of a win but recognised his side should have done better with abundant possession. Three times his forwards lost the ball over the try line.

Sale started slowly and within five minutes John Schuster had put over two penalties for Quins. He kicked two more but missed three other chances in his worst overall kicking performance this season.

Howarth responded with a penalty but the game was failing to entertain; much endeavour but little flair.

Within two minutes of the second half Quins scored a try. Jamie Williams came into the line, made a powerful run and then chipped and chased. Jim Mallinder failed to gather and Williams grabbed the loose ball and went over.

Quins looked well in control until two Sale tries in two minutes made it a real contest. The orchestrator of both was Barrie-Jon Mather. The powerful centre made huge inroads into home territory and when the attack broke down the ball was quickly recycled and worked from the right touchline for Chris Yates to score in the left corner.

Two minutes later Yates made the break and Mather looked as though he would score himself. But with Quins players converging he looped a try-scoring pass to the wing Steve Hanley.

Howarth missed a penalty in the 76th minute from just inside the Quins half and three minutes later slewed an easier kick wide.

SCORERS: Harlequins: Try: Williams. **Penalties:** Schuster 4. **Sale: Tries:** Yates, Hanley. **Conversion:** Howarth. **Penalty:** Howarth.
Harlequins: Williams; O'Leary, Officer (Keyter, 77min), Schuster, Luger; Lacroix (capt), Harries (Wright, 70); Leonard, Murphy, Hazlin (Barnes, 70), Llewellyn, Morgan (Davison, 30), Brooks, Jenkins, Sheasby.
Sale: Mallinder (capt); Moore, Mather, Yates, Hanley; Howarth, Ellis; Winstanley (Williamson, 74), Greening, Bell, Baldwin, Rahanjaia, Anglesea (A Sanderson, 70), P Sanderson, O'Cuinneagain.
Referee: C White (Gloucester).

Newcastle 29 West Hartlepool 13

West pay for Brewer's sin-bin spell

David Irvine

SIN-BINNING can be singularly unfair unless it is applied consistently. Yesterday at a gale-ravaged Kingston Park Newcastle doubled their score while West Hartlepool's captain Mike Brewer was off the field and a largely knife-edge contest was decided by a flattering margin.

West's frustration was understandable as Va'aiga Tuigamala, who scored the first of the home team's two tries in Brewer's absence — he had up-ended an opponent at the line-out — had himself got away with a dangerous late tackle.

Until Newcastle's burst, West had held the lead three times; most significantly after 55 minutes when their hooker Shane McDonald became only their second forward to score a try this season. Once again, however, West could look back on missed opportunities.

West led through a penalty by Stephan Vile and Newcastle were uncharacteristically shaky in defence. Stephen John followed through for a try near the posts after another Newcastle mix-up and Ross Beattie picked up after a scrum to leave Jonny Wilkinson an easy conversion. Soon after half-time West won a line-out in the corner through their captain Phillipe Farner and McDonald was credited with the touchdown.

It proved to be a briefly held advantage. A vigorous drive by George Graham forced a penalty from West which Wilkinson kicked and then, with Brewer off, the game swung dramatically in Newcastle's favour. Wilkinson converted both tries before Brewer returned and the game again swung back to West.

SCORERS: Newcastle: Tries: Wilkinson, Beattie, Tuigamala, Charlton. **Conversions:** Wilkinson 3. **Penalty:** Wilkinson. **West Hartlepool: Tries:** John, McDonald. **Penalty:** Vile.
Newcastle: Legge; Naylor, Tuigamala (P Massey 75min), Andrew (capt), Wood; Wilkinson, Charlton; Graham, Needale, Hurter, Weir, Archer, Wilson, Arnold (Cardnell 78m), Beattie.
West Hartlepool: Farrell (Greaves 65m); Benson, John, Tongnoa, Maclure; Vile, Stone, Van Der Esth (Sparkes 75m), McDonald, Beal, Farmer Captain, Penton, Bentley, Monkley, Brewer.
Referee: S Piercy Yorkshire.

Anglo-Welsh friendly: Swansea 50 Bath 17

Henry's judgment frees stamper Morris for Five Nations

Paul Rees

WHEN Swansea and Cardiff started their unsanctioned matches against Allied Dunbar Premiership One clubs last September, the Wales coach Graham Henry was advised by his employers to stay away.

The New Zealander's response was to make a public appearance at the Arms Park where he received a standing ovation. His Welsh Rugby Union paymasters squirmed, but he has continued to watch Cardiff and Swansea regularly and, with the Welsh Premier Division washed out, was at St Helen's on Saturday.

When the Wales squad prop Darren Morris was sent off 10 minutes from the end for stamping on the Bath hooker Andy Long, who needed six stitches in a head wound, Swansea did not have far to look for the independent adjudicator required to decide the player's punishment. Henry banned Morris for two matches which means he will be back in action long before Wales's Five Nations' opener against Scotland in February.

Henry will be asked to explain why he put an official gloss on something the WRU pretends does not exist. Last week he was warned about entering the political arena when he requested a meeting with the Union's chairman, Glanmor Griffiths, and the Welsh chairman of the International Rugby Board, Vernon Pugh.

He demanded to know what was being done to ensure a British League started next season and was told that it was firmly on the agenda. Griffiths and his counterpart on the Rugby Football Union, Brian Balster, have held secret negotiations in the last week with an announcement expected next month.

Now that the friendlies have lost their curiosity value, they are merely cosmetic. Bath, weighed down by injuries and illness as well as a loss of form, were not interested. Swansea were too strong up front and too slick behind.

SCORERS: Swansea: Tries: Robinson 2, Charvis, Arnold, Jenkins, penalty try. **Conversions:** A Thomas 4. **Penalties:** A Thomas 4. **Bath: Tries:** Tindall, Balshaw, penalty try. **Conversions:** Balshaw.
Swansea: Weatherley (Back, 65min); Rees, Taylor, Gibbs (capt), Robinson; A Thomas, R Jones; Morris, Jenkins, B Evans (Anthony, 66), Arnold, Moore, Charvis, D Thomas (B Evans, 71), L Jones.
Bath: Callard (Balshaw, 47); I Evans, Tindall (Maggs, 47), Catt, Adebayo; Perry, Cooper; Yates, Long (Mears, 71), Hilton, Borthwick, D Jones, Eamshaw, Webster (capt), N Thomas (Bryan, 74).
Referee: P Bolland.

Cardiff bugged by injuries and flu

A FLU bug and a mounting injury-list took their toll on Cardiff as they stumbled to their third successive defeat in the Anglo-Welsh League at a rainswept Northampton on Saturday.

A crowd of 7,249 at Franklins Gardens saw Cardiff beaten 38-10 by the in-form English club and reduced to 14 men for the last five minutes when the Wales centre Leigh Davies was sent to the sin-bin by the referee Fred Howard.

Northampton, even without their injured captain Tim Rodber, scored tries through Matt Dawson (2), Craig Moir (2), Budge Pountney and Grant Seely. Paul Grayson used the strong wind effectively to kick four conversions.

Mike Hall crossed for Cardiff with Paul Burke landing a conversion and penalty.

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FA Carling Premiership

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
		Home					Away						
Chelsea	19	6	3	0	15	5	3	6	1	16	12	14	36
Aston Villa	19	6	2	1	17	11	4	4	2	12	8	10	36
Man Utd	19	7	3	1	27	12	2	4	2	12	11	16	34
Leeds	19	6	2	1	16	3	2	6	2	16	14	15	32
Arsenal	19	6	4	0	15	4	2	4	3	6	7	10	32
Middlesbrough	19	4	5	1	16	10	3	4	2	15	14	7	30
West Ham	19	5	3	1	14	10	3	2	5	8	13	-1	29
Wimbledon	19	6	3	1	16	10	2	2	5	9	20	-5	29
Liverpool	19	4	3	2	17	10	4	1	5	15	13	9	28
Leicester	19	5	2	2	14	9	2	4	4	8	11	2	27
Derby	19	2	5	2	8	8	3	5	2	10	9	1	25
Newcastle	19	5	2	3	14	13	1	4	4	8	11	-2	24
Tottenham	19	4	3	2	15	15	2	3	5	9	14	-5	24
Everton	19	2	6	2	3	5	3	2	4	9	12	-5	23
Sheff Wed	19	5	2	3	13	6	1	2	6	7	14	0	22
Blackburn	19	4	2	4	12	11	0	3	6	7	16	-8	17
Coventry	19	3	4	3	11	12	1	1	7	5	15	-11	17
Charlton	19	2	3	3	13	9	1	4	6	10	21	-7	16
Southampton	19	2	2	6	12	20	1	2	6	3	17	-22	13
Nottm Forest	19	1	5	3	8	11	1	1	8	9	24	-18	12

Premiership results

Arsenal (1) 1 West Ham (0) 0
Overmars 7
Arsenal (4-4-2): Manninger; Dixon, Keown, Bould, Vivas; Parlour, Vieira, Petit, Overmars; Anelka (Wreh 30min; Grimandi 75), Bergkamp. Subs not used: Lukic, Winterburn, Boa Morte.
West Ham (3-5-2): Hislop; Potts, Ferdinand, Pearce; Sinclair, Lampard, Berkovic, Lomas, Keller (Lazaridis 63); Wright, Hartson. Subs not used: Forrest, Breacker, Omoyinmi, Margas.
Att: 38,098. Ref: P Jones (Loughborough)

Blackburn (1) 2 Aston Villa (0) 1
Gallacher 44, Sherwood 88; Scimeca 81
Blackburn (4-4-2): Filan; Kenna, Henchoz (Broomes h-t), Dailly, Davidson; Gillespie, McKinlay, Sherwood, Wilcox; Gallacher (Duff 73min), Sutton (Davies 88). Subs not used: Johnson, Fettis.
Aston Villa (3-5-2): Oakes; Southgate, Ehiogu, Scimeca, Watson, Taylor (Collymore 89), Hendrie (Rachel 55), Thompson, Wright; Joachim, Dublin. Subs not used: Charles, Draper, Grayson.
Att: 27,536. Ref: D Gallagher (Banbury).

Coventry (0) 1 Tottenham (1) 1
Aloisi 81; Campbell 17
Coventry (4-4-2): Ogrizovic; Nilsson, Shaw, Williams (Breen 61), Edworthy (Aloisi 65); Boateng, McAllister, Soltvedt, Froggatt; Whelan, Huckerby (Shilton 78). Subs not used: Telfer, Kirkland.
Tottenham (4-4-2): Walker; Carr, Young, Campbell, Sinton; Fox, Nielsen, Anderton, Ginola (Clemence 81); Ferdinand (Iversen 88), Armstrong. Subs not used: Baardsen, Calderwood, Edinburgh.
Att: 23,096. Ref: K Burge (Tonypandy).

Everton (0) 0 Derby (0) 0
Everton (5-3-2): Myhre; Dunne, Bilic, Materazzi, Unsworth, Ball; Dacourt, Hutchison, Collins (Branch 88min); Cadamarteri (Barmby 70), Bakayoko. Subs not used: Short, Grant, Simonsen.
Derby (5-3-2): Poom; Kozluk, Prior, Carbonari, Elliott, Laursen (Hunt 77); Carsley, Eranio, Powell; Delap (Harper h-t), Wanchope. Subs not used: Hoult, Sturridge, Bridge-Wilkinson.
Att: 39,206. Ref: S Lodge (Barnsley)

Man Utd (1) 3 Nottm Forest (0) 0
Johnsen 28, 59, Giggs 62
Man United (4-4-2): Schmeichel; P Neville, Berg, Johnsen, Irwin; Beckham, Butt, Keane (Greening 88min), Giggs (Blomqvist 75); Sheringham, Scholes (Solskjaer 63). Subs not used: Van der Gouw, Brown.
Nottm Forest (4-1-3-2): Beasant; Louis-Jean, Chettle (Doig 68), Armstrong, Rogers; Bart-Williams (Bonalair 54); Stone (Hodges 77), Johnson, Quashie; Shipperley, Freedman. Subs not used: Crossley, Darcheville.
Att: 55,216. Ref: J Winter (Stockton-on-Tees)

Middlesbro (1) 1 Liverpool (2) 3
Deane 32; Carragher 17, Redknapp 35, Heggem 88
Middlesbrough (3-5-2): Schwarzer; Cooper, Vickers, Pallister (Fleming h-t); Festa, Maddison (Stamp 72min), Gascoigne, Townsend (Beck 79), Gordon; Deane, Ricard. Subs not used: Beresford, Moore.
Liverpool (3-5-2): James; Carragher, Staunton, Babb; Heggem, Redknapp (Harkness 90), Ince, Berger, Bjornebye; Fowler (Riedle 58), Owen (McManaman 77). Subs not used: McAteer, Friedel.
Att: 34,626. Ref: G Poll (Tring)

Newcastle (0) 0 Leeds (1) 3
Kewell 38, Bowyer 62, Hasselbaink 90
Newcastle (4-4-2): Given; Barton (Hughes 51), Dabizas, Howey, Charvet; Georgiadis (Ketsbaia 62), Lee, Speed, Glass; Shearer, Ferguson. Subs not used: Harper, Hamann, Solano.
Leeds (4-4-2): Martyn; Halle, Wetherall, Woodgate, Harte; Haaland, Bowyer, Hopkin, Ribeiro (McPhail 57); Kewell (Smith 90), Hasselbaink. Subs not used: Wijnhard, Granville, Robinson.
Att: 36,783. Ref: G Willard (West Sussex).

Sheff Wed (0) 0 Leicester (1) 1
Cottee 34
Sheff Wed (4-4-2): Srnicek; Atherton, Thome, Walker, Hinchcliffe; Alexandersson (Briscoe 67min), Jonk, Stefanovic, Rudi; Humphreys (Morrison 57), Booth. Subs not used: Pressman, Magilton, Sonner.
Leicester (4-4-2): Keller; Sinclair, Elliott, Walsh, Ullathorne; Impey (Savage 81), Lennon, Izzet (Taggart 82), Guppy; Cottee, Heskey. Subs not used: Marshall, Arphexad, Zagorakis.
Att: 33,513. Ref: M Reed (Birmingham)

Southamptn (0) 0 Chelsea (1) 2
Flo 20, Poyet 48
Southampton (4-3-1-2): Jones; Hiley, Lundekvam, Monkou, Colleter; Palmer, Oakley (Dodd 82min), Kachloul; Le Tissier (Ripley 27); Basham h-t); Beattie, Ostenstad. Subs not used: Bridge, Stensgaard.
Chelsea (4-4-2): De Goey; Ferrer, Duberry, Leboeuf, Babayaro; Petrescu, Morris, Poyet (Terry 72), Goldbaek; Zola, Flo (Nicholls 83). Subs Not Used: Forssell, Myers, Hitchcock.
Att: 15,253. Ref: D Elleray (Harrow).

Wimbledn (1) 2 Charlton (1) 1
Euell 33, Hughes 51; Redfearn 29
Wimbledon (4-4-2): Sullivan; Cunningham, Perry, Blackwell (Kimble h-t), Thatcher; Earle, Ardley (Cort 81min), Hughes, Euell; Leaburn, Gayle. Subs not used: Ekoku, Kennedy, Baldo.
Charlton (4-5-1): Ilic; Mills (Parker 83), Tiler, Rufus, Powell; Kinsella, Robinson, Redfearn, Newton (Youds 73), Brown; Jones. Subs not used: K Jones, Konchesky, Royce.
Att: 19,105. Ref: G Barber (Tring).

Non-league

CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kettering	24	14	5	5	32	18	47
Cheltenham	21	12	7	2	40	17	43
R & D'monds	19	10	6	3	36	16	36
Stevenage	21	9	8	4	26	20	35
Yeovil	20	8	8	4	29	22	32
Hednesford	20	8	8	4	27	22	32
Kingstonian	20	8	8	4	29	25	32
Hereford	22	9	5	8	26	23	32
Morecambe	22	9	4	9	40	43	31
Woking	20	8	5	7	25	23	29
Hayes	19	9	2	8	23	27	29
Kidderminster	20	8	4	8	30	23	28
Northwich	22	7	7	8	24	25	28
Dover	20	6	8	6	23	23	26
Leek Town	21	7	3	11	31	31	24
Barrow	23	6	6	11	25	38	24
Southport	20	6	8	7	25	30	23
Telford	21	4	8	9	22	37	20
Forest Green	20	4	7	9	23	29	19
Doncaster	21	4	5	12	22	32	17
Farnborough	20	4	5	11	21	40	17
Welling	22	2	9	11	19	36	15

Doncaster 0 Leek Town 1
Hawtin 41

Farnborough P Hayes P

Forest Green P Yeovil P

Kettering 1 Hednesford 0
Reynor 77

Kidderminster 1 Hereford 0
Thomas 89

Kingstonian 0 Woking 0

Northwich 1 Morecambe 1
Walters 19; Norman 45

Southport 0 Barrow 4
Coates 53, Foster 57, 90, Marginson 82

Stevenage 0 Rush & D'nds 0

Telford 0 Cheltenham 3
Watkins 67, Eaton 75, Jones 84 (og)

Welling 0 Dover 3
Farley 10 (og), Witter 59 (og), Le Bihan 76

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier Division: Bamber Bridge 4 Lancaster 3; Blyth Spartans 1 Gateshead 2; Chorley 2 Winsford Utd 2; Frickley 3 Whitby Town 3; Gainsborough 3 Worksop 1; Hyde Utd 1 Stalybridge 1; Marine 2 Accrington Stanley 0; Runcorn 0 Altrincham 3; Spennymoor 2 Bishop Auckland 0. **Postponed:** Colwyn Bay v Leigh RMI; Guiseley v Emley.
First Division: Alfreton Tn 3 Matlock Tn 2; Ashton Utd 0 Stocksbridge PS 2; Bradford PA 3 Lincoln Utd 1; Congleton Tn 3 Burscough 2; Flixton 1 Trafford 2; Gretna 2 Whitley Bay 0; Hucknall Tn 1 Belper Tn 0; Radcliffe Bor 3 Witton Alb 1.
Postponed: Netherfield Kendal v Droylsden; Great Harwood Tn v Farsley Celtic; Harrogate Tn v Eastwood Tn.
RYMAN LEAGUE: Premier Division: St Albans 5 Bishop's Stortford 1.
DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Bromsgrove 0 Worcester City 2; Burton Albion 1 Gresley Rovers 0; Grantham 3 Ilkeston Tn 1; Hastings 0 Crawley Town 1 (Abandoned after 38min); Kings Lynn 1 Boston Utd 2; Nuneaton 1 Atherstone 0; Tamworth 3 Halesowen 1. **Postponed:** Bath City v Salisbury; Weymouth v Dorchester; Cambridge City v Rothwell Town; Gloucester City v Merthyr.
Midland Division: Blakenall 2 Bloxwich Tn 0; Evesham Utd 0 BC Warwick 0; Hinckley Utd 0 Bedworth Utd 0; Redditch Utd 1 Solihull Bor 0; Shepshed Dyn 1 VS Rugby 0; Stamford AFC 4 Wisbech Tn 2; Stourbridge 0 Moor Green 2; Weston-S-Mare 1 Clevedon Tn 3. **Postponed:** Cinderford Tn v Newport AFC; Stafford Rngrs v Bilston Tn; Sutton Coldfield Tn v Paget Rngrs.
Southern Division: Fisher Ath London 2 Dartford 1; Margate 2 Sittingbourne 1; Newport (IoW) 0 Bashley 0. **Postponed:** Andover v Witney Tn; Ashford Tn v Folkestone Inv; Brackley Tn v Baldock Tn; Cirencester Tn v Yate Tn; Erith & Belvedere v Chelmsford C; Havant & Waterlooville v Fleet Tn; Raunds Tn v Corby Tn; Tonbridge Angels v St Leonards.
N-W TRAINS LEAGUE: First Division: Atherton Colls 0 Atherton LR 1; Cheadle Tn 1 Vauxhall GM 6; Kidsgrove Ath 1 Newcastle Tn 1; Maine Rd 2 Salford C 1; Mossley 3 Glossop NE 1; Nantwich Tn 0 Leek CSOB 0; Ramsbottom Utd 2 Rossendale Utd 1; Skelmersdale Utd 3 St Helens Tn 2; Workington 3 Holker Old Boys 0. **Postponed:** Prescot Cables v Bootle.
ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE: First Division: Bedlington Ter 3 Consett 0; Billingham Tn 1 Billingham Syn 1; Chester Le Street 1 Easington 1; Guisborough Tn 2 Marske Utd 2; Penrith 2 Tow Law Tn 2; Seaham RS 0 Dunston Fed 0; Shildon 2 West Auckland 2; South Shields 3 Jarrow Roofing 3; Stockton 2 Crook Tn 0. **Postponed:** Newcastle BS v Morpeth Tn.
NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier Division: Arnold Tn 2 Pontefract Cols 0; Denaby Utd 0 Armthorpe Wel 2; Hallam 2 Brigg Tn 1; Maltby MW 2 Ossett Alb 4; North Ferriby Utd 2 Sheffield 2; Ossett Tn 1 Selby Tn 1; Staveley MW 1 Pickering To 1. **Postponed:** Thackley v Garforth Tn; Glasshoughton Welf v Buxton; Liversedge v Eccleshill Utd.
COMPLETE MUSIC HELLENIC: Abingdon 0 Wantage 0; Banbury 3 Bicester 2; Burnham 2 Didcot 0; Carterton 2 North Leigh 1; Fairford 0 Cirencester2.
COURAGE COMBINED COUNTIES: Hartley Wintney 2 Cove 0; Netherne 0 Chessington & Hook 3; Reading 2 Sandhurst 0; Walton Casuals 2 Raynes Park 3.
JEWSON EASTERN: Bury 0 Newmarket 1, Gorleston 2 Gt Yarmouth 2; Halstead 2 Maldon 2; Harwich & P 2 Ipswich 1; Stowmarket 1 Felixstowe 4; Sudbury W 3 Sudbury T 0; Warboys 2 Histon 5; Watton 0 Diss 3; Woodbridge 1 Lowestoft 0.
LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth 2 Haverfordwest 1; Bangor City 1 Caernarfon Town 1; Barry Town 1 Inter Cable-Tel 1; Holywell 0 Connah's Quay 0; Newtown 4 Caersws 0; TNS 1 Rhayader Town 0. **Postponed:** Carmarthen Town v Afan Lido; Conwy v Rhyl.

UNIBOND LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Altrincham	22	11	6	5	37	19	39
Gateshead	23	11	5	7	36	30	38
Bamber Br	23	10	8	5	34	28	38
Worksop	22	11	4	7	30	27	37
Guiseley	18	11	2	5	31	20	35
Winsford Utd	22	9	7	6	33	26	34
Gainsborough	23	10	4	9	34	29	34
Blyth Sp	24	10	3	11	30	33	33
Hyde	21	8	8	5	29	19	32
Lancaster	20	9	5	6	31	26	32
Whitby	21	7	9	5	39	33	30
Emley	19	8	6	5	25	21	30
Leigh	20	7	7	6	32	28	28
Marine	24	6	9	9	32	38	27
Spennymoor	24	7	4	13	33	44	25
B Auckland	25	6	7	12	32	45	25
Stalybridge	21	6	6	9	31	33	24
Frickley	19	5	9	5	25	27	24
Runcorn	19	5	8	6	18	24	23
Colwyn Bay	21	6	4	11	25	35	22
Chorley	23	3	10	10	27	41	19
Accrington	22	4	5	13	21	38	17

RYMAN PREMIER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aylesbury	19	12	5	2	34	13	41
Sutton Utd	19	12	4	3	38	22	40
St Albans	19	11	6	2	39	22	39
Billericay Tn	20	11	5	4	28	18	38
Purfleet	22	11	4	7	43	29	37
Hendon	20	9	6	5	41	31	33
Aldershot Tn	19	8	5	6	38	19	29
Dag & Red	19	8	5	6	40	29	29
Boreham Wood	19	7	7	5	29	26	28
Enfield	19	8	3	8	32	26	27
Gravesend	18	8	3	7	23	21	27
Harrow Borough	21	7	5	9	33	36	26
Bromley	20	7	4	9	34	34	25
Basingstoke	18	7	3	8	30	25	24
Dulwich	20	6	5	9	20	27	23
Slough	19	5	6	8	25	34	21
Chesham	19	6	3	10	29	39	21
Carshalton	21	5	5	11	22	41	20
W & Hersham	19	5	3	11	23	38	18
Hampton	19	4	5	10	22	42	17
B Stortford	21	3	7	11	29	51	16
Heybridge	20	3	5	12	19	48	14

DR MARTENS PREMIER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nuneaton	22	15	5	2	50	18	50
Bath	19	10	3	6	29	18	33
Boston Utd	22	8	9	5	36	25	33
Ilkeston Utd	22	8	9	5	32	28	33
Crawley	18	10	3	5	28	23	33
Gresley	18	10	2	6	26	20	32
Hastings	19	8	5	6	21	17	29
Gloucester	19	8	5	6	29	27	29
Atherstone	18	7	7	5	26	23	28
Grantham	19	9	1	9	29	28	28
Cambridge	21	8	4	9	25	30	28
Merthyr T	20	8	3	9	33	30	27
Worcester	19	8	3	8	18	24	27
Tamworth	19	8	2	9	28	32	26
Rothwell	19	6	7	6	19	25	25
Weymouth	20	6	6	8	26	28	24
Burton	19	7	3	9	23	29	24
Halesowen	22	6	5	11	30	37	23
Salisbury	18	5	5	8	21	31	20
Bromsgrove	21	5	3	13	23	42	18
Dorchester	19	4	5	10	22	31	17
King's Lynn	20	4	3	13	22	35	15

Nationwide League

FIRST DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunderland	25	15	8	2	53	16	53
Ipswich	25	14	6	5	36	15	48
Watford	25	12	7	6	43	35	43
Birmingham	25	12	6	7	38	24	42
Bradford	24	12	5	7	42	27	41
Huddersfield	25	12	5	8	37	40	41
Bolton	24	10	10	4	44	32	40
Norwich	24	11	7	6	39	32	40
Grimsby	25	11	5	9	30	29	38
West Brom	25	11	4	10	46	42	37
Sheff Utd	25	9	7	9	37	41	34
Wolverhampton	25	9	7	9	34	27	34
Barnsley	25	8	9	8	30	33	33
Crystal Palace	24	9	6	9	36	40	33
Swindon	25	8	6	11	35	40	30
Tranmere	25	6	12	7	32	35	30
Stockport	25	6	11	8	30	32	29
QPR	25	8	5	12	28	34	29
Bury	25	7	7	11	21	31	28
Port Vale	25	7	4	14	29	48	25
Portsmouth	25	6	6	13	32	42	24
Oxford Utd	25	6	5	14	27	48	23
Bristol City	25	4	8	13	34	53	20
Crewe	25	4	6	15	27	50	18

Birmingham (1) 1 Sheff Utd (0) 0
Furlong 20 pen
Birmingham Poole, Rowett, Marsh, Robinson, Ablett, Johnson, McCarthy, Adebola (Forster 78), Furlong (Grainger 89), O'Connor, Ndlovu. Subs not used: Hughes.
Sheff Utd Kelly, Delles, Quinn, Hitsen, Derry, Sandford, Woodhouse, Marker (Morris 73), Marcelo (Twiss 80), Devlin, Hamilton. Subs not used: Ford.
Att: 22,006. Ref: C Foy (St Helens).

Bolton (0) 0 Bradford (0) 0
Bolton Jaaskelainen, Cox, Whitlow, Frandsen (Gunnlaugsson 65), Warhurst, Fish, Gardner, Jensen, Holdsworth, Taylor, Sellars. Subs not used: Phillips, Elliott.
Bradford Walsh, Wright, Jacobs, McCall, Moore, O'Brien, Lawrence, Blake, Watson (Rankin 65), Whalley, Beagrie. Subs not used: Todd, Westwood.
Att: 24,625. Ref: S Baines (Chesterfield).

Crewe (0) 3 Bury (0) 1
Little 47, Rivers 53, Wright 90; Woodward 79
Crewe Kearton, Bignot, Smith, Macauley (Foran 84), Unsworth, Charnock, Wright, Johnson, Jack, Little (Lightfoot 90), Rivers. Subs not used: Street.
Bury Kiely, Woodward, Williams, Daws, Lucketti, West, Swailes (Barrick 71), Littlejohn (Avdiu 71), James, Billy, Preece (Jemson 71).
Att: 5,333. Ref: R Pearson (Peterlee).

Huddersfld (0) 2 Grimsby (0) 0
Stewart 53, Beech 65
Huddersfield Vaesen, Jenkins, Edwards, Johnson, Heary, Gray, Richardson, Beech, Stewart, Allison, Beresford. Subs not used: Barnes, Phillips, Lawson.
Grimsby Davison, McDermott, Black (Livingstone 67), Handyside, R Smith, Coldicott, Donovan (Widdrington 74), D Smith, Nogan (Lester 51), Ashcroft, Groves.
Att: 18,186. Ref: P Richards (Preston).

Ipswich (3) 3 Portsmouth (0) 0
Naylor 23, 25, Dyer 31
Ipswich Wright, Kennedy, Thetis, Mowbray, Venus, Clapham, Dyer (Bramble 87), Holland, Petta (Holster 82), Abou (Johnson 74), Naylor.
Portsmouth Petterson, Thogersen (Pethick 46), Perrett, Thomson, Robinson, Igoe, Hillier, Vlachos (Andreasson 46), Simpson, Peron, Claridge (Nightingale 46).
Att: 21,805. Ref: P Robinson (Hull).

Oxford Utd (0) 1 C Palace (0) 3
Windass 68; Foster 59, Morrison 78, Bradbury 80 (pen)
Oxford Utd Gerrard, Robinson, Powell, Wright (Cook 68), Watson, Warren (Wilsterman 87), Remy, Smith, Thomson (Beauchamp 45), Windass, Murphy.
Crystal Palace Miller, Jihai, Smith, Moore (Rizzo 90), Linighan, Foster, Burton, Zhiyi, Bradbury, Jansen (Morrison 45), Rodger. Subs not used: Mullins.
Att: 8,375. Ref: P Danson (Leicester).

QPR (2) 2 Norwich (0) 0
Murray 11, Peacock 18
QPR Miklosko, Heinola, Baraclough, Morrow, Ready, Maddix, Rose, Peacock, Sheron (Steiner 1), Gallen, Murray. Subs not used: Rowland, Scully.
Norwich Watt, Kenton (Forbes 29), Mackay, Grant, Wilson, Jackson, Adams, Marshall (Russell 81), Roberts, Coote (Fleming 81), Llewellyn.
Att: 15,251. Ref: A Wiley (Burntwood).

Stockport (0) 0 Barnsley (1) 1
De Zeeuw 28
Stockport Nash, Connelly, Dinning, Hughes, Flynn, McIntosh, Mathews (Wilbraham 88), McInnes, Angell, Moore, Cooper (Gannon 71). Subs not used: Woodthorpe.
Barnsley Bullock, Eaden, Moses, De Zeeuw, Tinkler, Appleby, McClare, Hignett, Goodman, Dyer (Turner 71), Jones. Subs Not Used: Burton, Richardson.
Att: 10,263. Ref: T Leake (Darwen).

Swindon (0) 1 Wolves (0) 0
Onuora 89
Swindon Talia, Robinson, Hall, Holbert (Walters 64), Taylor, Borrows, Ndah (Watson 81), Hay, Onuora, Bullock, Davis. Subs not used: Reeves.
Wolverhampton Stowell, Atkins, Gilkes, Richards, Sedgley, Curle, Emblen, Robinson, Connolly, Keane, Osborn. Subs not used: Corica, Murray, Whittingham. Booked: Curle.
Att: 11,627. Ref: F Stretton (Nottingham).

Tranmere (0) 1 Sunderland (0) 0
Taylor 64
Tranmere Coyne, Allen, Thompson, McGreal, Hill, Irons, Mahon, Santos, Jones (Parkinson 45), Mellon, Taylor. Subs not used: Morrissey, Morgan.
Sunderland Sorensen, Makin, Scott, Ball, Melville, Butler, Rae, Clark, Quinn, Bridges (Dichio 55), Gray (McCann 65). Subs not used: Williams. Booked: Quinn, Dichio.
Att: 14,246. Ref: B Burns (Scarborough).

Watford (0) 1 Bristol City (0) 0
Smart 57
Watford Chamberlain, Bazeley, Kennedy, Page, Palmer, Iroha, Smart, Hyde, Noel-Williams, Johnson, Gudmundsson. Subs not used: Robinson, Rosenthal, Mooney.
Bristol City Phillips, Brennan, Bell, Hutchings (Goodridge 82), Shail, Edwards, Murray (Thorpe 61), Tistimetanu (Doherty 74), Akinbiyi, Torpey, Andersen.
Att: 15,081. Ref: R Styles (Waterlooville).

West Brom (1) 3 Port Vale (0) 2
Murphy 5, Bortolazzi 54, Hughes 75 (pen); Naylor 50, 56
West Brom Whitehead, Holmes, Potter, Bortolazzi, Murphy, Carbon, Maresca, Sneekes, Quinn (De Freitas 60), Hughes, Kilbane. Subs not used: Angel, Mardon.
Port Vale Pilkington, Walsh, Tankard, Bogie, Barnett (Beadle 78), Aspin, Lyttle, Talbot (McGlinchey 39), Foyle, Naylor, O'Callaghan (McQuade 83).
Att: 14,929. Ref: K Lynch (Kirk Hammerton).

Leading goalscorers (total): 25 Hughes (West Brom). **17** Stewart (Huddersfield). **15** Onuora (Swindon); Bellamy (Norwich); Roberts (Norwich); Ward (Barnsley). **14** Mills (Bradford); Gunnlaugsson (Bolton). **13** Irons (Tranmere); Akinbiyi (Bristol City). **11** Windass (Oxford Utd); Groves (Grimsby); Johnson (Ipswich); Scowcroft (Ipswich); Keane (Wolverhampton).

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Leading goalscorers (total): 18 Aloisi (Coventry; 17 for Portsmouth). **13** Dublin (Aston Villa; 4 for Coventry); Owen (Liverpool); Ricard (Middlesbrough). **12** Blake (Blackburn; 9 for Bolton; Yorke (Man Utd). **11** Hasselbaink (Leeds); Poyet (Chelsea). **10** Cole (Man Utd). **9** Zola (Chelsea); Fowler (Liverpool); Heskey (Leicester); Solskjaer (Man Utd). **8** Flo (Chelsea); Gayle (Wimbledon).

SECOND DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fulham	22	15	3	4	35	16	48
Walsall	23	14	4	5	35	26	46
Stoke	23	14	2	7	30	17	44
Preston	22	11	7	4	38	22	40
Gillingham	22	9	10	3	33	19	37
Bournemouth	21	10	6	5	34	22	36
Man City	23	8	9	6	26	21	33
Chesterfield	22	8	6	7	23	18	33
Millwall	23	8	8	7	23	25	32
Wigan	23	8	7	8	29	23	31
Reading	21	8	7	6	25	27	31
Blackpool	23	7	9	7	28	28	30
Luton	20	8	6	6	27	23	30
York	23	7	7	9	31	40	28
Colchester	22	6	8	8	21	27	26
Bristol Rovers	22	5	10	7	24	25	25
Wrexham	23	6	7	10	21	30	25
Notts County	22	6	6	10	28	33	24
Burnley	23	6	6	11	25	39	24
Northampton	23	5	9	9	22	26	24
Oldham	23	5	6	12	23	36	21
Macclesfield	23	4	9	10	19	29	21
Wycombe	23	4	8	11	22	29	20
Lincoln City	23	4	4	15	22	42	16

Blackpool (0) 1 Wigan (0) 1
Garvey 58; Liddell 84
Blackpool Banks, Bryan, Hills, Butler, Hughes, Bardsley, Garvey, Clarkson, Nowland, Patterson, Ormerod. Subs not used: Bushell, Shuttleworth, Carlisle.
Wigan Carroll, Green, Bradshaw, McGibbon, Balmer, Sharp, Kilford, Greenall, Liddell, O'Neill, Barlow (Jones 83). Subs not used: Lee, Jenkinson.
Att: 5,147. Ref: J Kirkby (Sheffield).

Bristol Rvrs P Gillingham P

Chesterfld (1) 1 Oldham (1) 3
Wilkinson 1; Allott 22, 65, Holt 56
Chesterfield Mercer, Hewitt, Nicholson (Jules 66), Curtis, Williams, Breckin, Willis (Lonergan 66), Beaumont, Blatherwick, Ebdon, Wilkinson. Subs not used: Simpkins.
Oldham Kelly, McNiven, Sinnott, Garnett, Rickers, Duxbury, Allott, Sheridan, Orlygsson, Whitehall (Innes 69), Holt. Subs not used: Swan, McGinlay.
Att: 5,448. Ref: R Fernandiz (Doncaster).

Fulham (1) 2 Colchester (0) 0
Smith 26, Hayles 73 (pen)
Fulham Taylor, Uhlenbeek, Brevett, Morgan, Coleman, Symons, Hayward, Bracewell (Trollope 84), Horsfield (Hayles 70), Peschisolido (Lehmann 70), Smith.
Colchester Emberson, Dunne, Betts, Williams, Greene, Buckle, Wilkins, D. Gregory, Dozzell (Sale 79), Abrahams (Lock 46), Stamps (N. Gregory 65).
Att: 11,939. Ref: P Walton (Warwick).

Lincoln (0) 1 Macclesfield (0) 0
Holmes 50
Lincoln Vaughan, Barnet, Bimson, Fleming, Holmes, Austin, Brabin, Finnigan, Battersby (Stant 82), Thorpe, Miller. Subs not used: Watts, Alcide.
Macclesfield Price, Hitchen, Ingram (Payne 83), Howarth, Wood, Sodje, Davies, Sorvel, Tomlinson (Sedgemore 69), Matias (Askey 31), Whittaker.
Att: 3,732. Ref: D Crick (Worcester Park).

Luton P Macclesfield P

Millwall (0) 1 Bournemth (1) 2
Harris 51; Warren 28, Stein 81
Millwall Spink, Bircham (Sadlier 82), Ryan, Cahill, Stuart, Fitzgerald, Reid (Hockton 78), Bowry, Harris, Shaw, Neill. Subs not used: Roche.
Bournemouth Ovendale, Young, Vincent, Howe, Warren, Bailey, Cox, Robinson, Stein, Fletcher, Bolt (Hughes 55). Subs not used: Rawlinson, O'Neill.
Att: 7,607. Ref: A D'Urso (Billericay).

Notts Co (3) 3 Nrthamptn (0) 1
Grant 1, Tierney 6, Richardson 44; Howey 72
Notts Co Ward, Hendon, Pearce, Redmile, Tierney, Richardson, Owers, Hughes, Grant (Jackson 87), Jones, Murray (Liburd 78). Subs not used: Strodder.
Northampton Turley, Gibb, Frain, Sampson, Howey, Hope (Freestone 46), Hunt (Peer 65), Savage, Corazzin, Wilkinson (Hunter 65), Spedding.
Att: 6,131. Ref: R Olivier (Sutton Coldfield).

Stoke (0) 0 Preston (1) 1
Jackson 7
Stoke Muggleton, Petty, Small, Sigurdsson, Robinson, Woods (Crowe 45), Keen, Kavanagh, Thorne, Lightbourne, Oldfield. Subs not used: Heath, Sturridge. Booked: Small, Sigurdsson.
Preston Lucas, Parkinson, Kidd, Murdock, Jackson, Gregan, Cartwright, Rankine, Macken (Harris 88), Byfield (Nogan 81), Eyres. Subs not used: Appleton.
Att: 23,272. Ref: G Frankland (Middlesbrough).

Walsall (1) 2 Wycombe (0) 2
Rammell 21, 64; McSporran 53, Brown 63
Walsall Walker, Marsh, Pointon, Porter, Green, Viveash, Wrack, Oss, Rammell, Larusson, Simpson. Subs not used: Brissett, Evans, Thomas.
Wycombe Taylor, Wraight, Vinnicombe, Ryan, Cousins, McCarthy (Emblen 37), Simpson, Brown, McSporran, Scott, Carroll. Subs not used: Read, Kavanagh.
Att: 6,258. Ref: M Jones (Chester).

Wrexham (0) 0 Man City (0) 1
Wiekens 56
Wrexham Cartwright, McGregor, Hardy, Brammer, Ridler, Spink, Cooke, Owen (Chalk 73), Connolly, Russ, Ward. Subs not used: Roberts, Morrell.
Man City Weaver, Crooks, Edghill, Wiekens, Vaughan, Horlock, Brown, Pollock, Taylor (Goater 73), Bishop (Whitley 85), Russell (Dickov 69).
Att: 9,046. Ref: T Jones (Barrow-in-Furness).

York (0) 3 Burnley (1) 3
Hall 54, Rowe 61, 72; Payton 23, Robertson 56, Armstrong 87
York Mimms, McMillan, Hall, Garrett, Jones, Barras, Connelly, Jordan, Cresswell, Rowe, Himsworth. Subs not used: Dawson, Prendergast, Rennison.
Burnley Crichton, Pickering, Morgan, Ford, Brass, Reid, Robertson, Armstrong, Cooke, Payton (Henderson 89), Eastwood (Swan 76). Subs not used: Vindheim.
Att: 5,630. Ref: S Mathieson (Stockport).

Leading goalscorers (total): 17 Stein (Bournemouth). **15** Asaba (Gillingham; 1 for Reading); Payton (Burnley). **14** Rammell (Walsall); Cresswell (York). **12** Hayles (Fulham; 10 for Bristol Rovers); Horsfield (Fulham; 8 for Halifax). **11** Barlow (Wigan); Goater (Man City); Gray (Luton). **10** Cureton (Bristol Rovers); Davis (Luton). **9** Corazzin (Northampton); Williams (Reading); Shaw (Millwall).

IRISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Bohemians 1 Shamrock Rovers 1; Dundalk 0 Bray Wanderers 1; University Coll Dublin 2 St Patricks Ath 2; Waterford Utd 0 Cork City 2. **Saturday:** Coleraine 0 Ballymena 1; Crusaders 1 Cliftonville 0; Glenavon 1 Portadown 0 (Abandoned after 60mins); Linfield 1 Glentoran 1. **Postponed:** Omagh Town v Newry. **Division One:** Distillery 0 Carrick 0. **Postponed:** Bangor v Ards; Larne v Ballyclare; Limavady Utd v Dungannon Swifts.
FAI NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier Division: Shelbourne 2 Derry City 0. **Postponed:** Finn Harps v Sligo Rovers.
Saturday 26th December 1998
POOLS CHECK: Half-time: Score draws (total 4): 9, 24, 27, 45. **No-score draws** (15): 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 28, 32, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 47. **Full-time: Score draws** (8): 2, 22, 31, 33, 34, 38, 44, 46. **No-score draws** (5): 3, 11, 23, 39, 47.

THIRD DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cardiff	23	14	4	5	32	18	46
Mansfield	23	12	4	7	37	29	40
Brentford	21	13	0	8	37	29	39
Cambridge Utd	22	12	3	7	36	27	39
Halifax	23	10	8	5	31	20	38
Peterborough	23	11	3	9	39	30	36
Scunthorpe	23	11	3	9	37	38	36
Leyton Orient	23	9	8	6	29	27	35
Brighton	23	11	1	11	32	32	34
Rotherham	23	9	6	8	42	35	33
Darlington	21	9	5	7	30	24	32
Swansea	22	8	8	6	27	22	32
Plymouth	22	9	4	9	26	21	31
Chester	22	7	9	6	30	31	30
Southend	23	8	6	9	30	32	30
Rochdale	22	7	8	7	22	24	29
Barnet	23	8	4	11	28	40	28
Exeter	22	7	6	9	22	25	27
Hartlepool	23	7	4	12	32	38	25
Torquay	23	5	10	8	25	31	25
Carlisle	21	6	6	9	18	23	24
Shrewsbury	23	6	6	11	17	29	24
Scarborough	23	6	3	14	25	37	21
Hull	23	4	3	16	19	42	15

Barnet (0) 1 Plymouth (1) 1
Currie 58; Forinton 21
Barnet Harrison, Stockley, Currie, Basham, Ford, Arber, Searle, Doolan, Charlery, McGleish, Wilson (King 85). Subs not used: Onwere, Sawyers.
Plymouth Sheffield, Ashton, Beswetherick, Bastow, Heathcote, Wotton, Barlow, Sweeney, Phillips, Jean (Marshall 59), Forinton. Subs not used: McCall, Adams.
Att: 2,519. Ref: K Hill (Royston).

Brighton (2) 3 Brentford (0) 1
Thomas 28, Minton 33, Arnott 79; Freeman 81
Brighton Ormerod, Browne, Sturgess, Minton, Johnson, Arnott, Thomas, Armstrong, Hart (Morales 45), Barker, Culverhouse. Subs not used: Mayo, Ansah.
Brentford Dearden, Folan, Anderson, Hreidarsson, Quinn, Bates (Bryan 78), Freeman, Hebel (Fortune-West 82), Owusu, Rowlands, Mahon. Sub not used: Oatway.
Att: 4,638. Ref: B Knight (Orpington).

Cambridge (2) 3 Rotherham (0) 2
Taylor 2, Benjamin 25, Mustoe 90; Knill 55, 69
Cambridge Utd Van Heusden, Chenery, Ashbee, Duncan, Joseph, Campbell, Wanless, Taylor (Mustoe 86), Butler, Benjamin, Russell. Subs not used: Preece, Walker.
Rotherham Pollitt, Warner, Dillon, Garner, Knill, Raven, White, Ingledow, Scott (Roscoe 10), Glover, Hurst. Subs not used: Thompson, Richardson.
Att: 5,325. Ref: M Fletcher (Warley).

Cardiff (1) 3 Shrewsbury (0) 0
Williams 40, Nugent 49, Hill 53
Cardiff Hallworth, Delaney, Ford, Mitchell, Young, Carpenter, Hill (Middleton 71), O'Sullivan (Legg 81), Williams, Nugent (Thomas 80), Fowler.
Shrewsbury Cooksey, Seabury, Hanmer, Wilding, Whelan, Tretton, Berkley, Kerrigan, Jagielka (Brown 57), Preece, Jobling (Craven 66). Sub not used: Beavers.
Att: 12,462. Ref: S Coddington (Sheffield).

Exeter (0) 1 Torquay (0) 1
Flack 88; Lee 65
Exeter Bayes, Fry, Power, Baddeley (Breslan 69), Gale, Gittens, Rowbotham (Curran 45), Rees, Flack, Curran, Gardner (Holloway 78).
Torquay Southall, Tully, Herrera, Robinson, Thomas, Leadbitter, Aggrey, McGorry, Lee, Partridge, Hill. Subs not used: Hapgood, Bedeau, Watson.
Att: 5,575. Ref: P Taylor (Cheshunt).

Halifax (0) 0 Darlington (0) 0
Halifax Martin, Thackeray, Bradshaw (Power 54), Sertori, J. Murphy, Stoneman, Newton, Lucas, Williams, Hanson, Brown. Subs not used: Wills, S. Murphy.
Darlington Preece, Brumwell, Barnard, Liddle, Tutill, Bennett, Leah, Oliver, Naylor (Roberts 83), Gabbiadini, Atkinson. Subs not used: Hunt, Dorner.
Att: 3,557. Ref: M Warren (Walsall).

Hull (0) 1 Chester (2) 2
D'Auria 83; Flitcroft 9, Whitney 11 (og)
Hull Wilson, Hocking (Morley 88), Swales, Whittle, Perry, Whitney, McGinty (Dudley 26), D'Auria, Williams, Faulconbridge, Peacock. Sub not used: Edwards.
Chester Cutler, Richardson, Smith, Reid, Davidson, Woods, Flitcroft, Priest, Murphy, Conroy (Wright 77), Alston (Shelton 86). Sub not used: Thompson.
Att: 6,695. Ref: P Rejer (Leamington Spa).

L Orient (0) 1 Swansea (0) 1
Smith 58 (pen); Alsop 83
Leyton Orient MacKenzie, Walschaerts, Lockwood, Smith, Inglethorpe, Clark, Ling, Joseph, Richards (Watts 73), Griffiths (Simba 68), Beall. Sub not used: Canham.
Swansea Freestone, Jones, Howard (Bird 79), Cusack, Smith, Bound, Coates (Price 79), Thomas, Alsop, Watkin, Appleby. Sub not used: Jenkins.
Att: 5,343. Ref: B Jordan (Tring).

Mansfield (2) 3 Scarborough (0) 2
Williams 10, Ryder 38, Harper 55; Greenacre 76, McNaughton 80
Mansfield Bowling, Ford, Harper, Ryder, Williams (Sissons 71), Hackett, Schofield, Walker, Lormor, Christie, Tallon. Subs not used: Allardyce, Bacon.
Scarborough Weaver, Jackson, Atkinson, Russell, Rennison, McNaughton, Worrall (Milbourne 65), Hoyland, Brodie (Robinson 65), Greenacre, Dabelsteen. Subs not used: Carr.
Att: 3,495. Ref: T Heilbron (Newton Aycliffe).

Rochdale (1) 1 Carlisle (0) 1
Peake 21; Monington 63 (og)
Rochdale Edwards, Sparrow, Barlow, Hill, Monington, Johnson, Farrell, Painter, Morris, Bryson, Peake. Subs not used: Jones, Williams, Stuart.
Carlisle Caig, Bowman, Searle, Whitehead, Brightwell, Paterson, Doble (McAlindon 73), Clark, Finney (Stevens 73), Anthony, McGregor. Subs not used: Varty.
Att: 2,900. Ref: A Hall (Birmingham).

Scunthrpe (0) 1 Hartlepool (0) 0
Forrester 65
Scunthorpe Evans, Fickling, Dawson, Logan, Harsley, Hope, Walker, Forrester, Eyre (Marshall 87), Gayle, Calvo-Garcia. Subs not used: Bull, Winstanley.
Hartlepool Miotto, Knowles, Smith, Barron, Lee, McGuckin, Miller, Stokoe, Howard, Midgley, Hutt. Subs not used: Irvine, Downey, Stephenson.
Att: 3,621. Ref: M Messias (York).

Southend (1) 2 Peterboro (0) 0
Fitzpatrick 4, Newman 70
Southend Margetson, Beard, Dublin, Roget (Morley 77), Newman, Coleman, Burns, Livett, Conlon, Fitzpatrick, Houghton (Clarke 21). Subs not used: Maher.
Peterborough Tyler, Hooper, Drury, Davies, Bodley, Butler, Farrell, Castle, Broughton, McKenzie, Etherington (Grazioli 67). Subs not used: Hanlon, Scott.
Att: 5,159. Ref: G Singh (Wolverhampton).

Leading goalscorers (total): 14 Forrester (Scunthorpe). **13** Peacock (Mansfield); Owusu (Brentford). **12** Glover (Rotherham); Williams (Cardiff). **11** Partridge (Torquay); Butler (Cambridge Utd); Benjamin (Cambridge Utd). **10** Charlery (Barnet); McKenzie (Peterborough). **9** Beech (Hartlepool); Minton (Brighton); Alsop (Swansea); Paterson (Halifax); Taylor (Cambridge Utd).

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Postponed: Barnstaple Tn v Bideford; Bishop Sutton v Keynsham Tn; Brislington v Backwell Utd; Bristol MF v Mangotsfield Utd; Melksham Tn v Chippenham Tn; Odd Down v Paulton Rvrs; Tiverton Tn v Elmore; Westbury Utd v Calne Tn; Yeovil TR v Bridport.

Scotland

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	19	12	4	3	35	19	40
Kilmarnock	20	10	7	3	28	11	37
Celtic	20	9	6	5	42	20	33
St Johnstone	20	7	8	5	23	26	29
Motherwell	20	6	7	7	19	26	25
Hearts	20	6	5	9	21	27	23
Aberdeen	20	6	5	9	21	30	23
Dundee	19	5	5	9	17	28	20
Dundee Utd	20	4	7	9	18	24	19
Dunfermline	20	2	10	8	18	32	16

Dundee (0) 0 Celtic (2) 3
O'Donnell 3, Rieper 12, Douglas 58 (og)
Dundee Douglas, Smith, Rogers (Sharp 63), Adamczuk, Irvine, Anderson (Annand 63), Grady, McInally (Rae 75), Falconer, McSkimming, Tweed. Subs not used: Raeside, Langfield.
Celtic Gould, Boyd, Mahe, Stubbs, Larsson, O'Donnell, Lambert, Moravcik, Burchill (Brattbakk 80), Rieper (McNamara 79), Mjallby. Subs not used: Annoni, McBride, Corr.
Att: 10,043. Ref: W Young (Clarkston).

Dunfrmine (0) 1 Aberdeen (0) 2
Shaw 53; Inglis 62, Jess 75
Dunfermline Butler, Shields, McCulloch, Ireland, French, Huxford, Smith, Britton (Ednobo 82), Petrie, Shaw, Squires. Subs not used: Westwater, Ferguson, Graham, Martin.
Aberdeen Stillie, Perry, Whyte, Pepper (Newell 83), Inglis, Jess, Kiriakov, Dow, Buchan, Rowson, Winters. Subs not used: Hart, Gillies, Esson, Good.
Att: 7,873. Ref: K Clark (Paisley)

Kilmarnock (1) 1 Hearts (0) 0
Holt 27
Kilmarnock Marshall, MacPherson, Baker, Montgomerie, McGowne, Reilly, Mitchell, Durrant (Mahood 78), McCoist (Roberts 74), Wright (Henry 88), Holt. Subs not used: Lauchlan, Strain.
Hearts Rousset, Pressley, McKinnon, Weir, McPherson, Locke, Murray (Makel 82), McSwegan (Quitongo 74), Hamilton (Holmes 82), Fulton, Flogel. Subs not used: McKenzie, Horn.
Att: 10,688. Ref: J Rowbotham (Kirkcaldy)

Motherwell (0) 2 Dundee Utd (0) 0
McMillan 55, Brannan 57
Motherwell Woods, McMillan, Brannan, Valakari, Coyle, Thomas, McCulloch (Adams 75), Doesburg (Christie 45), Teale, Nevin (May 74), Spencer. Subs not used: Ramsey, Bannister.
Dundee Utd Combe, Malpas (Skoldmark 76), Patterson, Pedersen (Miller 62), Olofsson, Zetterlund (Dolan 82), Easton, Mathie, Dodds, De Vos, Pascual. Subs not used: Thompson, Gallacher.
Att: 6,001. Ref: D McDonald (Edinburgh).

Rangers (0) 1 St Johnstone (0) 0
Porrini 71
Rangers Klos, Porrini, Amoruso, Hendry, Ferguson, Kanchelskis (McCann 48), Van Bronckhorst, Albertz, Guivarc'h (Wilson 70), Wallace (Miller 90), Vidmar. Subs not used: Amato, Brown.
St Johnstone Main, McQuillan, Dasovic, Kernaghan, O'Neil, Kane, McMahon (Lowndes 85), Connolly (Grant 80), Bollan, McAnespie (Simao 89), Dods. Subs not used: Griffin, Robertson.
Att: 49,479. Ref: A Freeland (Aberdeen).

Leading goalscorers (total): 18 Larsson (Celtic). **16** Wallace (Rangers). **13** Albertz (Rangers). **10** Jess (Aberdeen); Adams (Motherwell; eight for Ross Co). **9** Dodds (Dundee Utd; three for Aberdeen); Hamilton (Hearts); Johansson (Rangers). **8** Wright (Kilmarnock). **7** Annand (Dundee); Coyle (Motherwell); Donnelly (Celtic). **6** Van Bronckhorst (Rangers). **5** Adamczuk (Dundee); Burley (Celtic).

FIRST DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hibernian	21	14	5	2	44	22	47
Falkirk	21	12	5	4	36	20	41
Airdrie	21	11	4	6	29	23	37
Ayr	21	11	3	7	41	26	36
St Mirren	21	8	5	8	17	25	29
Clydebank	21	6	8	7	20	25	26
Hamilton	21	5	8	8	25	32	23
Gr Morton	21	5	5	11	21	26	20
Raith	21	4	8	9	21	30	20
Stranraer	21	3	1	17	20	43	10

Airdrie (2) 2 Raith (1) 2
Evans 7, Black 40 (pen); Cameron 11, Stein 74
Att: 2,360

Falkirk (1) 3 Stranraer (1) 2
Hutchison 32, Keith 65, 80; Bell 18, Ronald 58
Att: 3,260

Gr Morton (1) 1 Clydebank (0) 1
J Anderson 42; Docherty 85 (pen)
Att: 1,937

Hamilton (0) 0 St Mirren (0) 0
Att: 1,450

Hibernian (2) 3 Ayr (0) 0
McGinlay 25, Paatelainen 41, 58
Att: 14,106

SECOND DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Livingston	20	13	6	1	38	21	45
Inverness CT	20	11	5	4	41	31	38
Clyde	20	9	6	5	28	20	33
Partick	20	9	2	9	21	22	29
Stirling	19	9	2	8	29	31	29
Alloa	19	8	3	8	42	29	27
Arbroath	19	7	4	8	19	24	25
East Fife	20	6	4	10	26	38	22
Queen of South	20	3	6	11	20	29	15
Forfar	19	2	4	13	19	37	10

Clyde (0) 0 Partick (1) 1
McDonald 12
Att: 2,673

East Fife (1) 3 Inverness CT (0) 2
Allan 45, Dair 74, Martin 87; Teasdale 63, McLean 88
Att: 994

Queen Sth (1) 2 Livingston (0) 2
Eadie 1 (pen), Mallan 87; Millar 48, Bingham 72
Att: 1,221

THIRD DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ross County	20	15	1	4	50	20	46
Brechin	19	11	6	2	24	13	39
Stenhousemuir	20	10	4	6	32	21	34
Dumbarton	19	8	4	7	25	21	28
Albion	20	8	3	9	24	36	27
Berwick	19	5	9	5	23	23	24
Queen's Park	20	5	6	9	23	25	21
East Stirling	20	3	9	8	24	27	18
Cowdenbeath	20	5	3	12	20	36	18
Montrose	19	3	5	11	18	41	14

Albion (0) 1 Queen's Park (0) 0
Att: 322

Ross Co (0) 1 Cowdenbeath (0) 0
Gosibek 62
Att: 1,842

Stenhsmuir (2) 2 East Stirling (0) 2
Miller 22, 44; Walker 60, Barr 78
Att: 1,230

HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Brora Rangers 1 Wick Academy 0; Clachnacuddin 5 Fort William 1; Deveronvale 2 Buckie Thistle 5; Forres Mechanics 10 Nairn County 2; Fraserburgh 0 Peterhead 0 (abandoned after 30mins); Huntly 0 Cove Rangers 1 (Abandoned after 45mins): Lossiemouth 0 Elgin City 4, Rothes 1 Keith 7.

Pompey set for sale to northern group

Pay Symes

ALAN BALL will discover tomorrow if Portsmouth are to be spared a winter grappling against relegation by money pumped in from a northern-based consortium close to announcing a takeover of the ailing club. Martin Gregory is ready to sell his large shareholding to a Halifax businessman.

Ball described his team's performance in the 3–0 defeat at Ipswich as a "disgrace" but, if his mind wandered from the action, he could be forgiven because an off-field revolution is seemingly at hand.

Gregory, owner of 97 per cent of Portsmouth's shares, is ready to sell his stake to a consortium headed by Warren Smith, a businessman who tried and failed to buy Pompey from Gregory three years ago.

Smith has remained in touch with Gregory without until now finding a formula to seal a deal. Gregory, son of the recently deceased Jim Gregory who bought the club 10 years ago, has always maintained it was worth £8 million.

But recent death threats from angry Portsmouth fans against him and his children have altered his attitude and last week he voluntarily gave up the chairmanship and a place on the board as a first step in the club's sale.

The new chairman Les Parris took over only on the understanding that Martin Gregory and his family were prepared to sell their shares, a request to which he quickly agreed.

Late on Christmas Eve it was announced that a takeover was near and a press conference has been called for tomorrow morning.

The group will inherit a club in disarray. Debts total £5 million, some £3 million of it to the Gregory family estate in unpaid loans, a players' wage bill of Premiership proportions and a break-even crowd figure of 16,000 which is beyond a club in 21st position in the First Division.

Pompey also owe around £750,000 to the builders of a new stand and are losing £40,000 a week. Relegation is a distinct possibility unless the team is strengthened. Saturday's defeat was their 13th in 25 matches.

For the last two years Gregory, who admits he never shared his father's passion for football, has been negotiating the sale of the club to an American group led by Brian Howe, a Portsmouth-born former rock singer, and a Florida property millionaire, Vince Wolanin. But they could not agree terms despite numerous meetings.

Smith, like the Americans before him, is keen to develop land adjoining the 100-year-old Fratton Park into a new stadium. It is owned by the Rail Board but currently unused. Planning permission to include leisure and shopping facilities may prove a problem, as the city council has already indicated.

Ball, who has 3½ years of his contract to run, will hope money becomes available for new players. After Richard Naylor had scored twice and Keiron Dyer another in the first 31 minutes for Ipswich, the match ceased to be a contest.

Today Portsmouth entertain Oxford, (£13 million debts), when both sets of fans will join in a protest at the handling of their clubs.

Nationwide League round-up

Leaders undone as Taylor cuts a stylish dash for Rovers

WHEN top meet bottom at the Stadium of Light today, the First Division leaders Sunderland will be anxious to bounce back from an unexpected defeat whereas Crewe will start the match looking for their second win of the festive season.

Sunderland were beaten away for the first time this season at Tranmere, where Rovers' Scott Taylor was sent clear in the 64th minute and ran 40 yards before beating Thomas Sorensen with a right-foot shot.

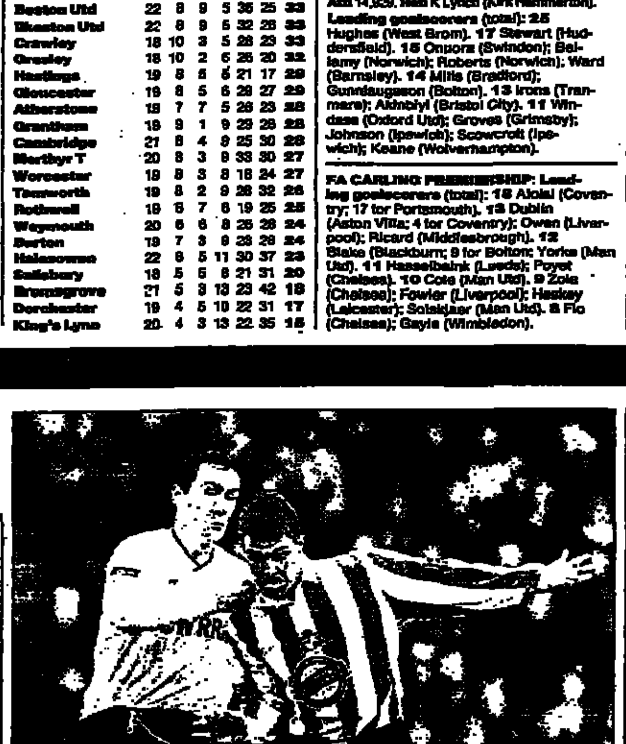
It was only Sunderland's second league defeat of the season and their manager Peter Reid said: "You can't expect to win very match. Possibly it is the kick up the backside we needed."

Rodney Jack inspired Crewe to their third home win of the season by beating Bury — 10 points but only five places above them — 3–1 at Gresty Road. Colin Little and Mark Rivers nodded Crewe into a 2–0 lead after the break and, although Andy Woodward cut the deficit, Jermaine Wright added the third in injury-time.

But it was Jack who had really unhinged Bury's defence and Crewe's manager Dario Gradi said: "Rodney is a match-winner and, if he can learn, then there's nobody more effective than him."

Oxford United, who today visit Portsmouth — fellow strugglers on form and in financial terms — lost 3–1 to Crystal Palace at the Manor Ground after conceding two late goals. The Palace substitute Clinton Morrison and Lee Bradbury, from the spot, earned victory after Dean Windass had equalised the visitors' opener with a 30-yard free-kick.

Norwich's promotion ambitions suffered a setback at Queens Park Rangers where Paul Murray and Gavin Peacock, both set up by Kevin Gallen, secured the points.


Clark of the caught . . . the Sunderland midfielder is held by a Tranmere player PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES PAWLOWSKI

Second Division

FULHAM moved two points clear of Walsall at the top of the table after a fourth successive victory, 2–0 at home to Colchester.

Neil Smith headed Kevin Keegan's team into the lead in the 26th minute and Barry Hayles, a £2 million substitute, secured the win with a penalty three minutes after coming on. "We can play a lot better," Keegan warned before today's game at Northampton.

Walsall had a goal disallowed and missed a penalty during their 2–2 draw at home to struggling Wycombe. Andy Rammell was denied a hat-trick by an offside flag and Bjarni Larusson hit his spot kick over the bar. Walsall briefly trailed 2–1 to goals by Jermaine McSporran and Steve Brown.

Manchester City warmed up for today's game at home to Stoke with a welcome but undeserved victory at Wrexham. "That was one of our worst displays of the season," said City's manager Joe Royle after Gerard Wiekens' 56th-minute header had moved his side up to seventh place.

Immediately above them are Bournemouth, who won 2–1 at Millwall thanks to Mark Stein's brilliant late goal. He played a one-two with Steve Fletcher before beating the advancing Nigel Spink.

Chesterfield slipped to eighth after losing 3–1 at home to Oldham. The 20-year-old Mark Allott scored twice to give Oldham only their second away win of the season.

Kim Grant, on loan from Millwall, scored after 48 seconds to set Notts County on their way to a 3–1 win over Northampton. The bottom club Lincoln improved their chances of survival by beating their fellow strugglers Macclesfield 1–0 with a 50th-minute goal by Steve Holmes. A late Gordon Armstrong strike earned Burnley a 3–3 draw at York.

Third Division

CARDIFF moved six points clear at the top of the Third Division after a 3–0 win over Shrewsbury at Ninian Park on Saturday.

The Bluebirds took the lead through the former Coventry striker John Williams, who scored with his second attempt after hitting the post. Kevin Nugent headed the second and the former Tottenham and England Under-21 midfielder Danny Hill scored the third.

Mansfield survived a rally by Scarborough to go second with a 3–2 home win. Lee Williams, Stuart Ryder and Steve Harper put the Stags on the road to victory before Scarborough hit back through Chris Greenacre and Michael McNaughton.

Fourth-placed Cambridge, 3–2 winners at home to Rotherham, were indebted to Neil Mustoe, who scored a last-minute winner after two headers from Rotherham's centre-back Alan Knill had pulled them level. John Taylor and Trevor Benjamin had put Cambridge clear before that.

Halifax are fifth after a goalless draw at home to Darlington, while Peterborough and Scunthorpe, both on 36 points, fill the remaining play-off places. Peterborough drop to sixth after a 2–0 defeat at their manager Barry Fry's former club Southend. Trevor Fitzpatrick and the former Norwich defender Rob Newman were on the mark.

Jamie Forrester scored the only goal as Scunthorpe beat Hartlepool, and Leyton Orient are one point off the play-off zone after a 1–1 home draw with Swansea.

Bottom-of-the-table Hull sunk deeper into the relegation mire with a 2–1 home defeat to Chester. David D'Auria's goal was the only reply to David Flitcroft's score and Jon Witney's own-goal. City now trail Scarborough by six points.

Barnet and Plymouth, Exeter and Torquay, and Rochdale and Carlisle all drew their games 1–1.

Premiership

Manchester United 3 Nottingham Forest 0

Beckham's artistry puts Forest in the shade

Mark Redding on the lethal footwork that led to an unwanted statistic

THE halfway point in the season and Manchester United are still in the hunt for their fifth Premiership title, albeit without necessarily showing a great deal of conviction.

Much huffing and puffing was required against Forest before the cry of "timber" could be heard from the home bench, and a single win in seven games seems thin ballast to be carrying into what should be one of the season's defining moments at the table toppers Chelsea tomorrow night. "It's looking tight at the top and consistency is the key factor now," said Alex Ferguson.

Match stats

	ManU	Nott
Possession	55%	45%
Attempts on target	7	0
Attempts off target	9	4
Corners	7	2
Fouls	10	10
Offsides	7	2
Bookings	1	3

"Our record at Chelsea has been brilliant and we have been excellent down there — just like they have been up here at Old Trafford. We've always threatened to score goals down there and I hope that continues."

The manager hopes to boost the team with the return of Andy Cole, the striker having pulled out of the Forest game with a groin injury, but his partner and leading 12-goal scorer Dwight Yorke remains doubtful with a similar problem.

Jaap Stam may also be missing with an ankle injury but that may not be a bad thing. As Gary Neville was suspended, Henning Berg and Ronny Johnsen enjoyed a Norwegian pairing at centre-back and helped United keep their first clean sheet since the goalless draw with Newcastle on November 8.

Ferguson has recently acquired the habit of leaping touchily to the defence of his much criticised back four but he knows he has no fears for the Premiership's top scorers going forward, especially with David Beckham in such commanding form. On Saturday the young midfielder seemed pacier than before and his right boot has become so accurate it might have been commandeered to steer smart missiles on to innocent civilians in an attempt to prop up a lame-duck American president.

Beckham was the fount of everything good that came from United on a typically filthy Manchester afternoon, underlining his remarkable resilience in bouncing back from that notorious World Cup nadir.

"When I got home I knew I just had to get on with my life and ignore all the extreme criticism," he explained. "It had crossed my mind that going abroad might be one way of getting some peace but I soon realised that I didn't want to be anywhere but at Old Trafford."

That was good news for the 55,000-plus at the ground, bad news for Forest, who to their credit put up a spirited show for at least the first 28 minutes as they endeavoured to avoid equalling their own Premiership record of 16 games without a win. One sweep of Beckham's right foot ensured they would, his corner dropping perfectly on to Johnsen's head for United's opener.

Johnsen scored again in the 59th minute, from Berg's nod down, but the pick of the bunch came three minutes later when Beckham wrong-footed the defence to release Ryan Giggs through a delicious chip over the on-rushing goalkeeper Dave Beasant. It was United's 39th goal in the league and certainly among their best.

"I don't think you will get a better piece of football anywhere in the country," Ferguson said.

Forest, firmly rooted at the bottom, take on Southampton today in a relegation six-pointer, still without their suspended striker Pierre van Hooijdonk.

Their manager Dave Bassett was blowing hot and cold afterwards, insisting he was still optimistic, then adding: "If I thought getting Forest a new manager would benefit them I would resign.

"But I am not going to sit down with the board and say I can't do it any more because I believe I can."

But Forest's season went Pierre-shaped long ago.



At full stretch . . . Emmanuel Petit lunges to deny West Ham's Eyal Berkovic possession as Arsenal confirmed they will not surrender their title lightly PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Arsenal 1 West Ham United 0

Arsenal stay ahead of schedule

David Lacey

ARSENAL may be on the march again but this time everyone will see them coming. Last season Arsène Wenger's team won the Premiership through a mixture of style and stealth; now their challenge will be silhouetted against the horizon.

Usually there is nothing like the experience of winning a championship for winning more championships and at first glance Arsenal would appear to be slightly ahead of schedule as they seek to retain a title for the first time since completing the hat-trick in 1935.

A year ago a home win on Boxing Day saw them complete the first half of their league programme with 33 points. Saturday's victory over West Ham United at Highbury has left Arsenal a point worse off after 19 matches, but now they are only four behind the leaders compared to 13 last season.

Clearly Wenger's side are set to stay in the thick of what promises to be the closest race the Premiership has experienced in its short history. What remains to be seen is how well equipped Arsenal are for a contest which will demand qualities somewhat different from those which saw them deny Manchester United a hat-trick with an unbeaten run of 15 wins and three draws.

Last Christmas United could have been forgiven for believing they had broken the back of the contest; certainly the bookmakers thought so. Free of the pressure of expectation, Arsenal just kept on winning.

But now, with at least five realistic contenders, Arsenal will be asked to survive a more demanding series of title eliminators. Liverpool and Chelsea come to Highbury next month and Arsenal visit Old Trafford in mid-February.

This afternoon they are at The Valley, which is rapidly becoming a slough of despond for Charlton Athletic, and anything other than an away win will be a surprise. With Chelsea and Manchester United playing tomorrow night, Arsenal could, if Aston Villa lose at home to Sheffield Wednesday, close the gap at the top to a single point.

Whatever happens, nothing will persuade Wenger to adopt the independent air of one who has broken the bank at Monte Carlo. As he pointed out on Saturday, all the Arsenal revival has amounted to so far is two home victories over Leeds and West Ham. "If we win five or six it could be different," he added but for that to happen his attack will have to start taking a higher proportion of its chances.

The way Arsenal began against West Ham was strongly reminiscent of their visit to Blackburn Rovers last Easter Monday when a cannonade of three goals in 14 minutes ended any lingering doubts about their championship potential. Except that this time an early goal turned out to be the only goal in a performance which petered out after half-time.

The return to form and fitness of Dennis Bergkamp and the response this has drawn from his Dutch compatriot Marc Overmars has provided the spark to reignite Arsenal's latest championship aspirations. When Overmars accepted a first-time pass from Ray Parlour before cutting inside past Steve Potts and Trevor Sinclair to drive the ball in at the near post after seven minutes their supporters hugged themselves in anticipation of a substantial victory.

That it turned out to be nothing of the kind was partly due to a series of saves from Shaka Hislop, who had been slightly at fault with the goal, combined with further reminders of Rio Ferdinand's excellence as England's only genuine sweeper. But Arsenal's profligacy was equally responsible. A solitary goal was a poor return for 30 shots with 10 on target.

Match stats

	Arsl	Ham
Possession	54%	46%
Attempts on target	10	1
Attempts off target	14	5
Corners	9	2
Fouls	12	9
Offsides	0	4
Bookings	1	2

The victory would surely have been more substantial had Nicolas Anelka not been forced off with an ankle injury on the half-hour. Bergkamp's scalpel was busy, Overmars was tormenting Sinclair and the dominance in midfield of Patrick Vieira and Emmanuel Petit was absolute, but the speed and vision of Anelka lay at the heart of West Ham's discomfort and, when he was forced to give way to Christopher Wreh, it was like replacing strip lighting with a 40-watt bulb.

Wreh proved a competent replacement for the injured Bergkamp as Arsenal completed the Double but, whereas Anelka looks to get behind defenders, the Liberian wants the ball played to his feet and on Saturday this introduced a flat note to what had been an exhilarating rhythm.

Arsenal will not want to lose Anelka for too long. Last season, after an uncertain start, the strength of his emergence in the new year helped persuade Wenger to sell Ian Wright to West Ham and, although Wright was given a generous reception on returning to Highbury for the first time since the move, nothing happened to question the Arsenal manager's judgment.

Given two chances late in the match to earn West Ham an unlikely point, Wright put the first wide and stumbled over the second when Eyal Berkovic looked better placed to score. Otherwise, starved of service and forming an uncomfortable partnership with the off-form John Hartson, this recent addition to the chat show circuit posed about as much threat as a latterday Russell Harty.

Yet the knowledge that Arsenal might have been denied victory in what was initially an absurdly one-sided encounter posed more questions about the depth of Wenger's squad and especially his attacking options.

"Will you go out and buy?" he was asked. "I may go out tonight," he smiled. But it might not be a bad idea for Arsenal to check out the January sales all the same.

Sheffield Wednesday 0 Leicester City 1

Cottee's sharp cut deepens the Italian pain

Derek Potter

DANNY WILSON was left to lament the loss of his Italian connection as his toothless Sheffield Wednesday side limped to defeat by Leicester, one that left Hillsborough looking anxiously below at a resurgent Blackburn and other potential relegation escapees.

Wednesday were without not only the disgraced Paolo Di Canio but also his compatriot Benito Carbone, serving a one-game ban and allowed to return to Italy for a family Christmas. Wilson badly needs Carbone's talents at Aston Villa today and could not begin to contemplate that he, like Di Canio, would not fulfil his duties to the club.

Wednesday had hoped Di Canio ("frigging about somewhere in Italy, I presume," Wilson lamented), who could have solved the goal problem, would be back. City had the 33-year-old Tony Cottee, who did score, and this in his 16th Christmas of football since he began at West Ham.

It was gloom, then, for Wilson, who added two more weeks to the club's ban ("definitely without pay") on Di Canio for not returning after what was supposed to be a brief trip to Italy. Di Canio had been scheduled to make his comeback against Leicester after the expiry of his long FA suspension for pushing over the referee Paul Alcock.

It was joy for O'Neill. Cottee has signed an extension of his contract that will see him into the new millennium and into his 36th year. Cottee's eighth goal of the season was cute and acute, drifted in at the far post a yard from the byline after his former Everton team-mate Andy Hichliffe made a hash of an intended clearance.

"I felt like a 17-year-old again," Cottee said after his 33rd-minute goal earned City a second away win this season and their first in the league here since 1970.

Misses by Petter Rudi in the first half and Niclas Alexandersson in the second after Emile Heskey threatened to score at the other end guaranteed a dour and goalless day for a workmanlike Wednesday who were rarely inspirational.

Anchorman in midfield rather than scorer is the role of Neil Lennon, who intends to ignore a £6 million valuation and reported interest by everal big clubs just as his manager has effectively reduced his chances of moving on.

"Martin has created something special at Filbert Street," said the 27-year-old Lennon, "and I want to see it through with the manager."

The strength of Matt Elliott in defence, a strength that must make his long-time admirers Liverpool envious, and the quality of Muzzy Izzet and Andrew Impey, not forgetting Cottee's winning goal, justified Lennon's loyalty and engineered Wednesday's third home defeat.

Wilson's despair about achieving a quick solution to the Di Canio problem was compounded by the absence of Carbone, who had just hit form and scored three times in the previous three games.

The statisticians say Wednesday remain the only team in the Premiership not to have hit the woodwork this season. Wednesday have also been offside the most, exceeding 100. Maybe they will knock on wood, stay onside more and see a change in goal luck in the new year.

Middlesbrough 1 Liverpool 3

Fate turns on Pallister's heel

Jeremy Alexander sees Boro's citadel breached at last amid a Riverside storm

TWO seasons ago, when Middlesbrough were last in the Premiership, they lay low and for their match before Christmas were unable physically or temperamentally to raise a team. On Saturday, lying fourth, unbeaten in 11 games and high on a victory at Old Trafford, everyone wanted to play. It was fatal.

Gary Pallister tested a heel, reckoned he was fit, realised after 10 minutes "it was playing up" and by half-time had lost Boro the initiative, the game and an unbeaten home record going back 14 months and 28 games. So much for Bryan Robson's warning, "we must not get carried away".

The gale could have carried unwitting Christmas hats away for ever. The Riverside turned its force into eddies that played havoc with good intentions — though with Liverpool's defence it is hard to know.

When Pallister failed to get up for a corner Paul Ince, with a clear sight of the target, headed 90 degrees askew to set up the first goal for Jamie Carragher. "Big Pally" was further exposed when Patrik Berger's 50-yard pass curled past him into Michael Owen's streaking stride. Though Mark Schwarzer blocked, Pallister played the rebound back to the keeper, who reflexively picked up. Jamie Redknapp converted the indirect free-kick.

Paul Gascoigne, returning from suspension, took no time to get into the book, a reckless foul. After that he played deep, eventually persuading the back three, whose distribution was woeful, simply to find him. It reduced Boro's attacking potency but the equaliser came from a golfer's free-kick which he hung in the wind for Brian Deane to nod softly in as Phil Babb and David James fell short of a challenge between them. It was the second time these two had been at cross purposelessness.

Liverpool, despite a seemingly ropy season, could move into the title shake-up if their defence could shore up. In the first half, battered as a North Sea cod, they must have hacked in panic clearance more times than Alan Hansen in his career. They looked like the back line of a table-football team, controlled by outside hand and all spinning and whacking in time and often getting the ball back in ricochet.

But in the second half the midfield, supervised by Redknapp, lowered the game's pulse with possession football. Then, at the end Steve McManaman, able next week to sign pre-contract transfer terms, returned from injury to show his misapplied skills — sinuous running and fatuous finishing.

His manager Gérard Houllier, calling him "a Bosman-case child", says he wants to keep him, does not doubt his commitment if selected and challenged people to name 10 players in Europe with "that sort of touch and creativeness".

In the last minute Vegard Heggem skipped in from the right past four defenders, exploiting dummy runs, and flicked in the third goal with the outside of his right foot. It was the sort of goal McManaman should score regularly. But, as Houllier said, anticipating Newcastle today, "we mustn't get carried away."

He had extra reason. Yesterday Liverpool warned players of their responsibilities after a tabloid story claiming the club's fancy dress Christmas party turned into a "wild sex orgy". Come to think of it, their defending could almost have passed for that.

Wimbledon 2 Charlton Athletic 1

Kinnear reaps reward for faith in the freedom of Hughes

Joe Bernstein

JOE KINNEAR fervently believes that what his chairman cannot provide in financial clout, he must compensate for in tactical nous.

His acumen has repeatedly borne fruit down the years and yet there must have been eyebrows raised at Selhurst Park at the beginning of this season when he decided to base his attacking strategy on one man, the talented yet unproven Northern Ireland international Michael Hughes.

No individual in Wimbledon history — a history of collective strength — has been given a licence to roam like Hughes. So far Kinnear's gamble on the 25-year-old Ulsterman has proved a master stroke. Hughes produced another superlative performance here and his team-mates showed the necessary discipline and work rate to make his freedom work.

After Charlton, trying to avoid a sixth successive defeat, had gone ahead on the half-hour with a tremendous curling shot from Neil Redfearn, it was towards Hughes that the Dons looked to lead a comeback.

Jason Euell lashed home Marcus Gayle's flick-on for an equaliser after 34 minutes and the veteran Robbie Earle sprinted back to his own goal-line like a teenager to hook away a Redfearn cross-shot on the stroke of half-time.

It does not take much for the Charlton players to start feeling sorry for themselves and the late withdrawals of their first-choice forwards Andy Hunt (flu) and Clive Mendonca (groin) hardly raised optimism levels.

Wimbledon grew stronger as the wind intensified, and it was almost inevitable that their former Charlton forward Carl Leaburn should set up the winning goal after 51 minutes, sticking out his chest and laying the ball back for Hughes to prod home from 18 yards.

As Charlton ended the weekend in the bottom three for the first time this season, their manager Alan Curbishley is hoping his anger will banish the players' self-pity.

"It's no good complaining of a lack of confidence," he said. "The players don't lack confidence in the week when they are telling me they should be in the team. There were a couple out against Wimbledon who should thank their lucky stars they were getting a game."

While Kinnear aims to equal his best League finish at Wimbledon, sixth, Curbishley can look no further than today's game against Arsenal. "It's a good one for us to get back on track," he said.

Coventry City 1 Tottenham Hotspur 1

Aloisi a bargain in the basement

Trevor Haylett

WE do not know what gifts Gordon Strachan dispensed in his household during the festive celebrations but they are unlikely to have included a shrewder purchase than John Aloisi, bought from Portsmouth for £650,000.

If the Australian carries on as he began at Highfield Road on Saturday — where he came on as a second-half substitute and scored within 16 minutes to give Coventry a precious point — Aloisi could turn out to be one of the bargains of recent times.

By cancelling out Tottenham's earlier effort with an elusive turn and confident finish, Aloisi enabled his new team to climb above Charlton and out of the bottom three.

The problem for the Coventry manager is how to fit his new signing into a team that is performing better than their recent struggles would suggest. They are compact and competitive, Steve Froggatt is an increasing influence on the left flank and both Noel Whelan and Darren Huckerby are working hard and effectively as they try to avoid being the one who gives way to Aloisi.

Had Whelan accepted one of three decent opportunities to score with his head either side of half-time, Saturday's script could have been somewhat different. To be fair to him, the third attempt was kept out only by Ian Walker's gymnastics.

The Tottenham goalkeeper's flying tip-over to deny Froggatt's swerving drive minutes before was, according to Strachan, "the save of the season".

The Coventry manager said of Whelan: "I think he is a very good player, I really do, but it seems that if there is a weakness in his game it's his heading." Strachan also acknowledged that Aloisi had made a strong case for a starting place today at West Ham. "He wants to improve and we will give him all the time and attention he needs to get better."

Tottenham, with their superior passing early on, enjoyed some bright moments before the interval but thereafter were pushed back by the force of Coventry's response and not even the ubiquitous Sol Campbell and the impressive Luke Young could deny the home side their just desert.

With David Ginola getting into the game only infrequently, Spurs mustered little threat after Campbell's goal, which had followed a Darren Anderton corner.

Anderton's dipping free-kick was pushed over at the last by Steve Ogrizovic — the 41-year-old starting his first game this season because Magnus Hedman fell ill — and equality was preserved. For the newest and the oldest Sky Blues it was a satisfying afternoon.

● Tottenham have completed the signing of Borussia Dortmund's midfielder Steffen Freund. He has signed a 3½-year contract after the clubs agreed a fee of DM2 million (£730,000).



Aloisi . . . making a point

هكذا من الأصل

Clogger

A sideways glance at soccer





The Nightclub Incident '98 XI

They all had a barney over a night out

Alan Shearer ... Team-building skills honed on Gillette in Dubai
Sol Campbell ... Sold policy after celebrating Scottish win
Paul Ince ... Brought Chelsea team of prostitutes to Swindon
Teddy Sheringham ... Disgraced England in World Cup Portugal game
Liverpool players ... Michael Owen snubbed by alleged Kuwait sultan
Alan Curbishley ... Bravely took on duty of Ulster in Portsmouth
Kevin Keegan ... Fought with multitude over Chelsea club plans
Paul Gascoigne ... Scrapes with cobbles in Leeds hit-and-run
Geoff Thomas ... Nothing to report in Strictly Ballroom
Paul Ferdinand ... Bread with Hartlepool players in Milk Cup
Stanley Matthews ... Wild West shenanigans in Tyrannosaurus

Their kit don't fit

No 69: Titus Bramble

The word is out on Ipswich's newest starlet, although the club are still keen to keep their tongue-wagging under wraps. Interesting raising questions about material if this is any guide.

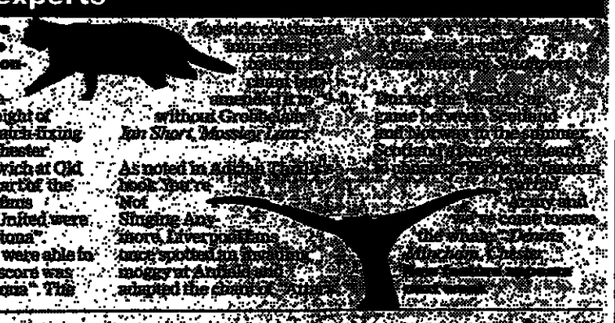
A life in pictures

Graham Kelly's glasses



1979 Self-effacing
1983 Ambitious
1988 Ambitious (tinted)
1989 Chirpy
1996 Masterful
1998 Retiring

Ask the experts



What have been the great sporting moments of football chants? A few seasons ago, at the height of the Grobbelaar match-fixing allegations, Manchester United played Ipswich at Old Trafford. At the start of the game the Ipswich fans informed us that United were "shit without Cantona". Later, United fans were able to point out that the score was "3-0 without Cantona". This

Jon Short, Messing Lane

As noted in a book [illegible] Not Singing Any More, Liverpudlians once spotted an Everton moggy at Anfield and adapted the chant to

State of the nation

Iceland

Population 250,000.
Unlikely champions ÍBV Vestmannaeyjar, who took the title in 1979, were only the third club outside the capital to win it since the championship began in 1912. More remarkably, the Westman Isles, where the club is based, are home to only 5,000 people, though the football ground holds 1,500.
National player stereotype Cold, hard, but liable to explode in a spectacular outpouring of molten lava at any moment.
Pioneer Albert Gudmundsson played for Rangers and Arsenal in the Forties, but Johannes "Shuggie" Edvaldsson was perhaps the first to make a real name for himself, winning two league titles with Celtic in the Seventies.
Important import Gudni Bergsson (right) opened up what has become the main clearing-house for Icelandic and Scandinavian players in England by signing for Bolton in 1996.
Stranger in a strange land Herman Hreidarsson, signed by Crystal Palace after a tip-off from the DJ David Jensen's Icelandic wife, came from the tiny Westman Isles to London. "He's got an innocence that you want to put into a can and give to other people," said Steve Coppell. Any sense of disorientation was not helped



in October when he played for Iceland in Armenia and then for Brentford against Hartlepool in the same week.
Favourite Son The former St Mirren, Aberdeen, Hearts and Dundee defender David Winnie was this year voted Iceland's footballer of the year, the first foreigner to win the accolade.
Contribution to world football Iceland weren't only happy to play the Faeroe Islands on a regular basis, but also provided the opposition for the pride of Queensland on two occasions, in 1990 and 1994, winning 4-1 and 1-0.
Contribution to back pockets (alleged) A large sum of money sent in a fishbox by trawler to Hull to smooth the transfer of Teddy Sheringham to Nottingham Forest in 1989.

A-Z of British football



"... is for Tackle, which does not always mean what it used to mean. Classic quote: "Aston Villa's keeper has impressed manager John Gregory with his mighty TACKLE!" — The Sun

Fashwatch

David Elleray



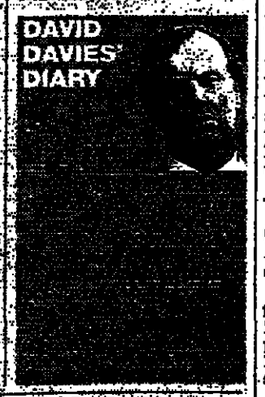
Home town: Harrow-on-the-hill.
Height: Five's other claim to fame is a minor public school, former home of composer George Frederick Handel, came fourth in the Guinness Top Twos list.
Occupation: Schoolmaster (teacher, some people call it).
Hobby: Refereeing rugby Saturday & Wednesday.
Dennis Wise being suspended.
Trademark speaking tendency to see his job in political terms. Once described refereeing as "a balance between tolerance and neo-fascism ... I tend to lean towards the latter." Brandishes cards at the slightest sign of ... someone leaning towards neo-fascism.

The gaffer tapes

"If my footballers were bricklayers, the house they built would fall down."
Look on the bright side, Alex Smith, only your club is falling down.

"It's not funny. We are playing again in 48 hours. They laugh at us about that." Ruben Rios, [illegible] why he is tipped to become a top-drawer winger after years with Eagle.

"Sometimes I think our posts and crossbars are thicker than everyone else's because we hit them so awful lot." Southampton's David Jones, shock, blames the frame for his confidence's poor form.



Cup of winners



Last week's answer: It was Parma against Royal Antwerp in the 1993 final. Antwerp have since developed a "relationship" with Manchester United. Winner: Steve Penney

In our last BCWC competition, we have chosen an unforgettable moment from Everton's tie against Feyenoord in 1995. What we want to know is, how many of the Dutch side who played (in either leg) went on to make appearances for British clubs? Post, fax or e-mail your answer to the address below to win your choice of this month's mail order goodies from the Football Book Club (0171-586 1906 for a catalogue). Please include a phone number.

Clogger welcomes contributions. Write to the Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. You can e-mail us at clogger@guardian.co.uk or fax us on 0171-713 4107.

Premiership: Blackburn Rovers 2 Aston Villa 1

Gregory calls for fourth official after Oakes gets raw card deal

Daniel Taylor sees a controversial sending-off upset Aston Villa as they lose the leadership

THE referee Dermot Gallagher left Ewood Park through a side entrance on Saturday with another blot on his record after wrongly sending off Aston Villa's goalkeeper Michael Oakes for deliberate hand-ball.

Gallagher, who was given a one-match ban earlier this year for not dismissing a player who had committed a statutory red-card offence, left Villa with a near impossible task when he sent off Oakes after 54 minutes of huff and puff in blustery conditions.

Oakes had rushed to the edge of his penalty area to collect a seemingly innocuous punt but realised his momentum was going to take him outside the penalty area and dropped the ball. Alerted by a linesman, Gallagher deemed it deliberate hand-ball.

As Oakes trudged down the tunnel, even the home supporters offered him a sympathetic round of applause, while the television analysts were pointing out Gallagher's error.

The Villa manager John Gregory said afterwards there had never been a better case for bringing in a fourth official to adjudicate using television evidence.

"I am not talking about petty offsides and the like," Gregory said. "But a referee should be able to consult a fourth official who has the benefit of television evidence for major decisions if there is any doubt in his mind.

"The mistake was really made by the linesman but it is Dermot who will be cast as the villain in the eyes of our supporters. Just think how Michael feels. He was playing a blinder and now he faces a suspension and could lose his first-team place. We shall be appealing for changes to be introduced by the FA but, not only that, the whole of football should be appealing, too."

Blackburn, who have been revitalised under Brian Kidd and should receive a further boost this week with the £4.3 million signing of the Barnsley striker Ashley Ward, were already a goal up at the time of Oakes's dismissal. Their first-half domination was rewarded by Kevin Gallacher's follow-up header on the stroke of half-time after Tim Sherwood's first effort had struck the underside of the bar.

Villa could count themselves unfortunate after a courageous fight-back capped by Riccardo Scimeca's 20-yard drive 10 minutes from time. But seven minutes later Sherwood benefited from the industry of the substitute Kevin Davies to beat Villa's replacement keeper Adam Rachel, although even that was overshadowed by visiting complaints of hand-ball.

Sherwood was one of the chief dressing-room dissenters during Roy Hodgson's inglorious final days at the club, but appears finally to have realised his duties are as a footballer rather than a sulker.

"I was not happy a few weeks ago but that has changed now and I am enjoying coming into the club again," said Sherwood. "All of the manager's ideas are geared for success in the Premiership and we are moving in the right direction."

Villa lost not only their lead in the Premiership but possibly Lee Hendrie and Ian Taylor to injuries for today's visit of Sheffield Wednesday, a match they must win to regain the initiative from Chelsea.

Match stats

	Black	Villa
Possession	50%	50%
Attempts on target	6	5
Attempts off target	6	5
Corners	5	3
Fouls	14	12
Offsides	2	7
Bookings	4	1
Sendings-off	0	1



All net up . . . Kevin Gallacher gets in a fine mesh after scoring Blackburn's opening goal PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE BRUNSKILL

Everton 0 Derby County 0

The Smiths are miserable now

Mark Tallentire

ON the only other occasion Everton entertained Derby County on Boxing Day it was also a draw. But the similarity ends there.

That game, in 1938/39, finished 2-2 and Everton went on to become champions while County settled for a respectable sixth place.

After this painstaking 90 minutes, the best that both clubs can hope for this season is mid-table security even though the managerial Smiths, Everton's Walter and Derby's Jim, seemed happy enough with a point.

Everton's sixth goalless home draw in 11 Premiership games was greeted by boos from all sides of the ground despite Walter Smith having the luxury of a full-strength team for the first time this season. His message afterwards remained a familiar one. "All away teams are difficult to score against but we have to start turning these draws into wins."

Derby adopted the tactics which have served them well on their travels — getting men behind the ball and relying on the wit of the midfield to spring Paulo Wanchope. Although they were never in trouble at the back, the tactic succeeded only once, when Stefano Eranio left Richard Dunne and Slaven Bilic face down in a heap on the halfway line, only for Michael Ball to get back with a well-timed tackle as Wanchope bore down on goal.

That apart, the sum total of Derby chances was a vicious free-kick by Horacio Carbonari that was blocked by Thomas Myhre and a shot from eight yards skied by Wanchope.

Everton were even less threatening, their only near thing a deflected shot by Ibrahima Bakayoko which Mart Poom did well to turn away.

Derby replaced Rory Delap, who had damaged knee ligaments, with Kevin Harper in the second half. Dean Sturridge, the more usual option was left on the bench following speculation about a £2.5 million move to Sheffield Wednesday.

"His head was not right to play" was his manager's terse assessment, although a lack of alternative bodies may mean the striker faces Middlesbrough today.

Everton fans, who have seen only eight Premiership goals at Goodison Park all season, four of them by Manchester United, will be glad they are facing Spurs on enemy turf.

Newcastle United 0 Leeds United 3

No goal, no Ba but Gullit

Michael Walker sees Newcastle's manager talk down his critics and talk up his team

FOR a man angrily asserting his allegiance to Newcastle United in particular and the North-east in general, while lambasting the local media and a vocal Newcastle shareholder for questioning his commitment to St James' Park, symbolically perhaps it would have been better had the piece of paper being folded and unfolded by Ruud Gullit's fingers on Saturday evening not been Dutch money.

But it was: guilders talk, though not as much as Gullit who, during a lengthy and persistent response to last week's reports about him spending too much time in Amsterdam, offered Kevin Keegan and Bryan Robson as examples of men who live far away from the clubs they manage and then asked the press gathered three feet in front of him: "Why have a go at me?"

Gullit answered the question himself — "I think I know why" — although he would not elaborate on that. Maybe he did not want to be undiplomatic, a reason he gave for refusing the opportunity to speak to the shareholder who called him "semi-detached" at Newcastle's annual general meeting last Monday, but he did say: "I am not here thinking about whether the share price goes up or down. I'm here for everything.

"Management wise, we are doing very, very well for the club. That is why it was out of order to say this.

"This defeat does not help but I have big shoulders. I am happy with the club, the players; we will go forward from this."

Gullit's intended answer to his critics had been to produce Ibrahim Ba from Milan on Thursday but Ba failed a medical and Gullit was left without his winning punchline.

Having envisaged Ba as a replacement for Keith Gillespie, Gullit was also left without a right winger to supply Alan Shearer and Duncan Ferguson, who were together for the first time, though Gullit said that he had made "a breakthrough" on another signing.

It is likely to be Didier Domi, a Paris St-Germain full-back, although presumably Shearer and Ferguson would prefer it to be Steve Stone of Nottingham Forest, given his crossing ability. There was not exactly a drought of crosses here as David Wetherall, Jonathan Woodgate and Nigel Martyn — all excellent — would verify but there were not many from the byline.

Warren Barton's diagonal centre from deep after 36 minutes was typical. It found Shearer but the other part of the £23 million strike force had not read the knock-down. About 23 seconds later Leeds went in front.

Harry Kewell, who had an impressive game, scored from 12 yards following a rather clumsy pass from Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.

Kewell's shot was untrue yet it still beat Shay Given and after a brief, uncoordinated rally by Newcastle to start the second half, Given was beaten again. Kewell was at the heart of it again, turning Steve Howey before driving powerfully from the edge of the area. Given spilled the shot and Lee Bowyer poked the ball in.

Another Newcastle mini revival was prompted and David Hopkin headed off the line from Shearer but it was merely the prelude to a third Leeds goal.

The economic efficiency with which David O'Leary has his weakened side passing the ball was personified by the young substitute Stephen McPhail, his intelligent distribution allowing Hasselbaink to finish emphatically.

It was Hasselbaink's 11th goal of the season. Here is a Dutchman earning his guilders.

United at last



Chief executive job may go

THE FA may scrap the post of chief executive following Graham Kelly's resignation and hand more power to their chairman Keith Wiseman's expected successor.

Wiseman's reign is likely to come to an end when the FA Council meets next Monday, and the FA finance chairman Sir David Hill-Wood believes appointing a new executive chairman may be the way forward.

Sir David said: "I believe that if we do have an executive chairman, then to have a chief executive as well would be counter-productive."

Eight-page sports section



Trying time
London Scottish blow Saracens off title course
16



Run of the Mill
Williamson's easy ride to victory in the King George
13



Other pages

Football 17-19
Rugby Union 16
Cricket 15
Racing 14
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The Guardian EUROPE
Sport
Monday December 28 1998 www.football.guardian.co.uk

Plus Media
Pete Sampras interview
Sharon Stone
Williamson
UK
Durham
Television and radio
The weather in Europe

Australia v England, fourth Test

Mike Selvey in Melbourne sees the England captain score a first century against Australia to steer his side clear of early trouble

Stewart's opening gambit pays off

Gough turns up the pace for early breakthroughs

AFTER Saturday's wash-out had deprived almost 65,000 people of their traditional Boxing Day entertainment, England gave as good as they got here yesterday when the weather was straight from the Antarctic and Alec Stewart at last found the missing piece in the jigsaw of his career.

The England captain, restored to the opening position he craves, made his first Test century against Australia in his 45th and finest innings against them.

It was a display of jaunty strokeplay with a touch of arrogance and a share of the sort of good fortune that has scarcely come the way of Stewart and his side here. It rescued England from a disastrous start against the new ball and helped them to 270, having been put in to bat by Mark Taylor.

In barely 3½ hours Stewart made 107, hitting 16 boundaries. With the aid of Nasser Hussain, with whom he added 77 for the third wicket, and more especially Mark Ramprakash, whose 63 was his sixth Test half-century this winter, he pulled England round after Mike Atherton and Mark Butcher were out without scoring to Glenn McGrath.

In fading light — the day finished nine overs short of the full quota — Darren Gough produced some of the fastest bowling of the series, removing Michael Slater and Taylor before Justin Langer and Mark Waugh saw Australia through to 59 for two at the close.

For the two hours that Ramprakash was at the crease the batting was as good as any from either side in this series. Bowlers worried by a blustery, capricious wind that swirled round the vast stadium, were treated disdainfully, with the runs in their 119 partnership coming at a rate, dizzy for Tests, of four an over.

Matthew Nicholson, fast-tracked into the Australian side, took the wicket of Hussain but was generally treated scornfully. Stuart MacGill, who tricked and teased at Adelaide, was reduced for a while to the inaccurate leg-spinner of the first Test when England missed a chance to hammer him.

That MacGill subsequently played a major part in the day's proceedings tells the tale once more of England collapse. He ended Stewart's innings, bowling him round his legs when, perhaps still caught up in the excitement of reaching his century, the captain swept too vigorously without covering his stumps.

Ramprakash followed immediately, one of a brace of cheap wickets for Steve Waugh as he flicked loosely to the on side and lobbed a gentle catch to mid-on. Now the slide was on.

By the time Alan Mullally was leg-before to MacGill for his fifth nought in six innings England had subsided from 200 for three, with only modest resistance coming from Graeme Hick, whose 39 contained a huge midwicket six off MacGill, Dean Headley and Darren Gough. The leg-spinner finished with four for 61, his last three wickets coming in eight deliveries at no cost.

England's score was better than it might have been considering the first three overs, when Atherton was caught at the wicket and Butcher brilliantly claimed at short leg off bat and pad, but again not as good as it ought to have been.

Taylor, who rarely asks the opposition to bat first without good reason — of 25 tosses won out of 49, and incidentally 10 of the last 11 in Ashes matches, on only five occasions has he put the opposition in — might be satisfied with the outcome.

But equally he would have been surprised that, once the shine and hardness had gone from the new ball, strokeplay became relatively easy, attacking fields notwithstanding. There was less moisture than anticipated and pessimists, who could not see England reaching 150, were sorely disappointed.

Wonderfully as Stewart played, however, the question still needs to be addressed as to whether resuming his place at the top of the order, relinquishing the wicketkeeping duties to another debutant Warren Hegg in the process, was not a case of tinkering with things simply to accommodate the captain.

Specifically, the two successes of the England batting this series have been Hussain at three and Ramprakash, initially at six, then five and finally four. Butcher, meanwhile, for all his lack of success in other innings, had made a century in the first Test, his second in three matches: two hundreds in six Tests is not a bad ratio. Now, in order to sustain Stewart's move, Butcher was dropped to three which in turn moved Hussain and Ramprakash.

Gough's riposte in the evening was superb. For the first time, the Speedster — the measuring device that became such a revealing part of last summer's series — was being used in Australia but, when the home side began their innings, it was switched off.

A cynic might suggest it was because they did not want an Englishman to be seen bowling faster than an Australian. But it did not need a speed gun to show that Gough generated considerable pace, hitting Taylor and Langer body blows.

He deserved some luck and got it when Slater, attacking without discernible foot movement, was lbw and Taylor was smartly picked up by Hick at second slip, significantly, to his right; Hick seems to drop left-handers too frequently for comfort, perhaps because such chances generally come to his weaker left side.

A comparison with Alex Tudor would have been appropriate. But the young Surrey bowler was declared unfit on Boxing Day after an injury sustained during Christmas training. Reports that it came from playing football had, for the sake of all concerned, better be insubstantial. Tudor has already found enough ways of getting hurt in a brief career without help like that.

Paul Allott, page 15

Scoreboard

ENGLAND
First innings

M A Atherton c Healy b McGrath	0
*†A J Stewart b MacGill	107
M A Butcher c Langer b McGrath	0
N Hussain c Healy b Nicholson	19
M R Ramprakash c McGrath b S R Waugh	63
G A Hick c Fleming b MacGill	39
W K Hegg c Healy b S R Waugh	3
D W Headley c Taylor b McGrath	14
D Gough b MacGill	11
A R C Fraser not out	0
A D Mullally lbw b MacGill	0
Extras (lb7, w1, nb6)	14
Total (76 overs)	270

Fall of wickets: 0, 4, 81, 200, 202, 206, 244, 266, 270.
Bowlings: McGrath 22–5–54–3; Fleming 19–3–71–0; Nicholson 10–0–59–1; MacGill 19–2–61–4; S R Waugh 6–2–8–2.

AUSTRALIA
First innings

*M A Taylor c Hick b Gough	7
M J Slater lbw b Gough	1
J L Langer not out	28
M E Waugh not out	12
Extras (b4, lb5, nb4)	13
Total (for 2, 16 overs)	59

Fall of wickets: 13, 26.
To bats: S R Waugh, D S Lehmann, †I A Healy, D W Fleming, S C G MacGill, G D McGrath, M J Nicholson.
Bowlings: Gough 7–5–15–2; Headley 7–1–18–0; Mullally 3–1–12–0; Ramprakash 1–0–5–0.
Umpires: D Harper and S Bucknor.



Opening out . . . Alec Stewart, watched by Ian Healy, comes down the wicket to hit Australia's leg-spinner Stuart MacGill for four STU FORSTER



Point of no return . . . Gough sees off Slater BEN CURTIS

Premiership: Southampton 0 Chelsea 2

Chelsea fly high feeling low

Paul Weaver sees a knee injury to Poyet leave the leaders in no mood to celebrate

CHELSEA, whose victory at Southampton on Saturday returned them to to the top of the Premiership while extending their unbeaten run to 18 matches, do not attract a gush of sympathy when they lose a player.

There is suspicion, as when Elton John scuffed a pair of shoes or when Carmen Miranda mislaid one of her fruity hats, that the rich repertoire holds plenty more where that came from; in football, managers of ordinary clubs even exchange charred smiles and talk of odds being evened up.

So at The Dell on Saturday evening the grim faces in the Chelsea dressing-room spoke most eloquently about the importance of Gustavo Poyet, who because of a right knee injury is expected to miss not only tomorrow's match at home to Manchester United but possibly many more. Yesterday Gwyn Williams, the club's assistant manager, said: "We will not know the result of the scan until later in the week. But we are not talking here about a short-term injury. It looks like Gustavo will be missing for weeks rather than days."

The Uruguayan midfielder, who was carried off after a clumsy, two-footed challenge by Southampton's otherwise impressive new signing Patrick Colleter, is his club's 11-goal leading scorer and more besides. His creative skills sometimes represent him as the fulcrum of this exceptional side and his strength makes him equally useful in both penalty areas.

The fact that Chelsea could welcome back Graeme Le Saux, Roberto Di Matteo and Marcel Desailly for tomorrow's match, when Dennis Wise will complete his suspension, helps explain why there are not too many damp hankies concerning the club's latest casualty.

Contrast Chelsea's plight with that of Southampton, who may have to find replacements for Matthew Le Tissier and Stuart Ripley at Nottingham Forest this afternoon.

Poyet missed six months of last season with a cruciate knee ligament injury and, although he returned to collect a European Cup Winners' Cup medal, his absence weakened the side's Premiership resolve. His goal on Saturday made Chelsea's victory safe and he could prove more difficult to replace than Pierluigi Casiraghi, who is also suffering a long-term knee injury.

Afterwards the coach Graham Rix said with a shrug: "Gustavo's been on fire recently. We're going to miss him. We always have a theme before a match and the manager's big word before we came here was 'personality', though I think he spelt it 'personally'. The Dell can be a difficult place to come to and it was stressed that the younger players had to stand up and be men, which is what they did."

The absence of Poyet may tempt the player-manager Gianluca Vialli to return to the side. He played against Tottenham nine days ago, 10 days after his previous appearance against Aston Villa, so he is due. The Spurs game, however, was only his third in the league this season and his match fitness, if not his ability, is in question. As he approaches a year in office he has taken to the job like a duck to l'orange but very few carry it off as player-manager for very long.

The match between the second top and the second bottom sides followed a predictable pattern. Chelsea could even afford Celestine Babayaro, at left-back, to be a little accident prone, while in the middle of defence Frank Leboeuf had such a folly-full time it looked like one of those Christmas blooper compilations.

Such was the poise of their England Under-21 midfielder Jody Morris that none of this seemed to show. Then there were the goals. The first came after 20 minutes, a gentle but accurate volley from Tore Andre Flo after Gianfranco Zola's clever defeat of the offside trap. The second, a tap-in by Poyet, came three minutes into the second half.

"I thought Chelsea showed a lot of grit," said Southampton's manager David Jones. His side, too, showed a fighting spirit. But there are times when struggling sides no longer look masters of their bleak destiny.

Match stats

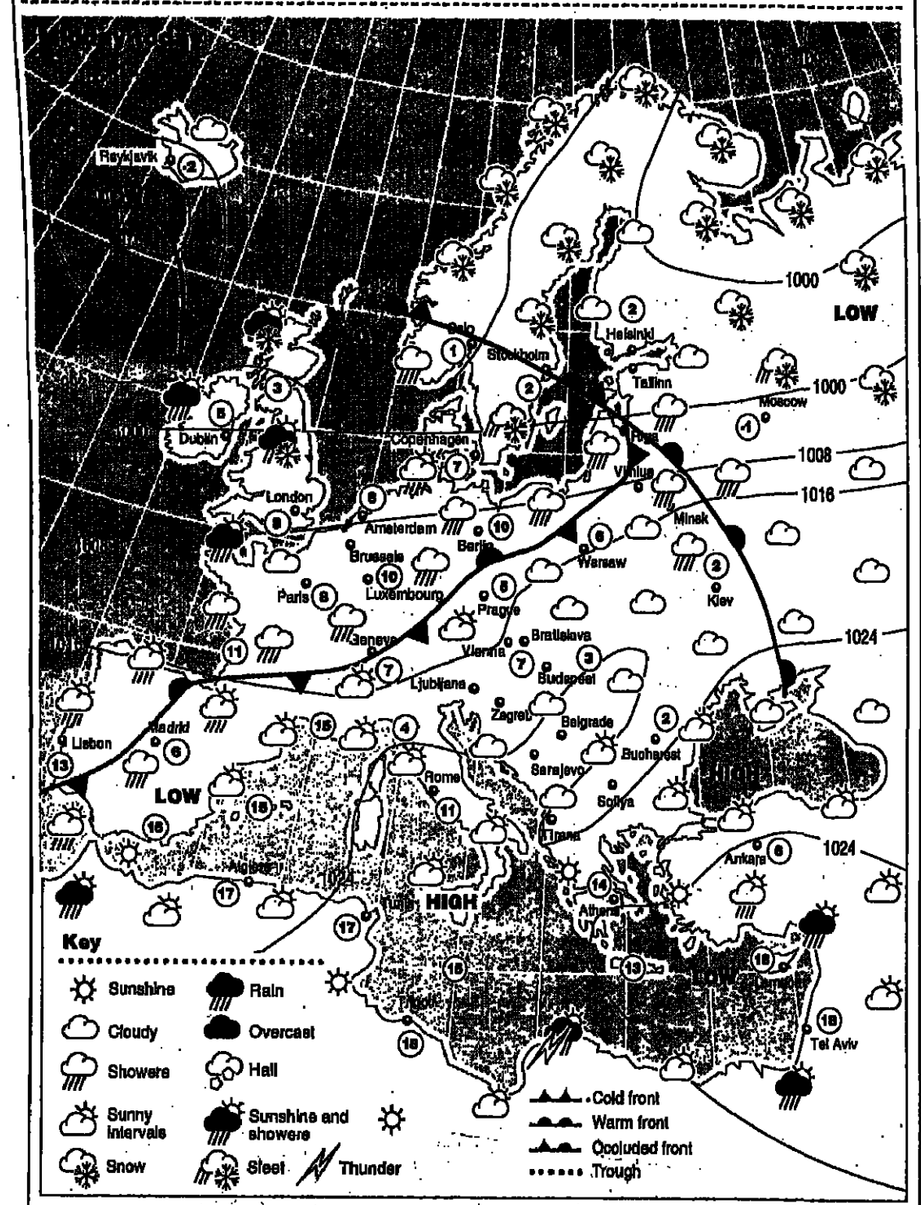
	Sou	Chel
Possession	51%	49%
Attempts on target	1	5
Attempts off target	3	9
Corners	10	3
Fouls	14	12
Offsides	5	3
Bookings	1	2



Jump lead . . . Gianfranco Zola leaps on Chelsea's goalscorer Tore Andre Flo CRAIG PRENTIS

هكذا من الاصل

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Today

	max	min	weather
Algiers	16	4	P
Amsterdam	5	4	F
Athens	9	5	Dr
Berlin	2	0	Sn
Bonn	5	3	H
Brussels	6	4	Sh
Copenhagen	3	0	Sl
Crete	13	10	Sh
Geneva	4	-5	R
Larnaca	18	10	Th
London	8	6	Sh
Madrid	10	-1	F
Milan	3	-1	Sn
Nice	10	5	C
Oslo	0	-2	S
Paris	6	4	Sh
Rome	6	-3	F
Stockholm	1	-1	Sn
Tunis	12	5	F
Vienna	-1	-3	F

Tomorrow

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	4	F
Amsterdam	11	6	F
Athens	10	5	S
Berlin	7	6	R
Bonn	10	6	R
Brussels	11	6	Sh
Copenhagen	5	-1	F
Crete	14	9	F
Geneva	8	3	Sh
Larnaca	19	10	F
London	10	5	Th
Madrid	12	1	S
Milan	8	2	M
Nice	13	7	F
Oslo	4	-1	Sn
Paris	9	6	R
Rome	13	2	F
Stockholm	3	-2	C
Tunis	18	8	F
Vienna	5	0	C

Saturday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	17	3	F
Amsterdam	10	2	Sh
Athens	13	5	S
Berlin	5	0	R
Bonn	10	7	R
Brussels	11	8	Sh
Copenhagen	7	1	R
Crete	14	9	F
Geneva	7	2	F
Larnaca	19	8	F
London	8	6	Sh
Madrid	12	1	S
Milan	6	0	M
Nice	13	6	S
Oslo	4	-1	Sn
Paris	9	6	R
Rome	13	2	F
Stockholm	3	-2	C
Tunis	18	8	F
Vienna	5	0	C

Sunday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	3	S
Amsterdam	8	4	Th
Athens	12	6	S
Berlin	10	5	Sh
Bonn	10	6	Sh
Brussels	11	6	Sh
Copenhagen	6	1	Th
Crete	14	10	S
Geneva	9	3	Sh
Larnaca	19	10	F
London	10	5	Th
Madrid	12	1	S
Milan	8	2	M
Nice	13	7	F
Oslo	3	-3	Sn
Paris	11	6	R
Rome	14	4	F
Stockholm	2	-3	Sn
Tunis	18	7	F
Vienna	6	1	F

C, cloudy; Dr, drizzle; F, fair; Fg, fog; H, hail; R, rain; Sl, sleet; Sn, snow; S, sunny; Th, thunder. * (previous day)

Around the world

Yesterday's lunchtime reports

		max	min
Ajaccio	C	11	52
Algiers	S	18	61
Alicante	S	14	57
Amsterdam	C	6	46
Athens	C	3	48
Auckland	C	22	72
B Aires	F	33	91
Bahrain	S	25	82
Bangkok	F	32	90
Barcelona	F	15	59
Beijing	S	4	39
Belgrade	M	-7	19
Berlin	S	10	50
Bermuda	C	24	75
Biarritz	F	18	64
Bombay	S	30	86
Bordeaux	C	11	52
Boston	C	1	34
Brussels	R	8	46
Budapest	C	-3	16
Cairo	C	17	63
Calvetta	S	24	75
Cape Town	S	24	75
Casablanca	C	17	63
Chicago	C	-1	30
Copenhagen	C	6	43
Corfu	F	12	54
Dallas	R	8	46
Dhaka	S	26	79
Dublin	C	4	39
Faro	S	14	57
Florence	M	3	37
Frankfurt	R	8	46
Funchal	C	18	64
Geneva	C	6	43
Gibraltar	F	15	59
Helsinki	Sn	0	32
Hong Kong	S	21	70
Innsbruck	C	6	41
Istanbul	F	7	45
Jo'burg	F	24	75
K. Lumpur	C	28	82
Kingston	C	29	84
Larnaca	F	18	64
Lima	C	24	76
Lisbon	S	11	52
London	R	5	46
Los Angeles	C	16	61
Luxembourg	R	7	45
Madrid	S	7	45
Majorca	F	15	59
Malaga	S	15	59
Malta	S	19	66
Melbourne	C	15	59
Mexico City	S	21	70
Miami	C	25	79
Milan	C	3	37
Montreal	C	-2	28
Moscow	Sn	1	34
Munich	C	11	52
Nairobi	C	27	81
Naples	S	10	50
New Delhi	Fg	10	50
New Orleans	M	7	45
New York	C	1	34
Nice	C	10	50
Oporto	C	13	55
Oslo	Sn	0	32
Paris	C	11	52
Perth	S	31	88
Prague	C	9	48
Reykjavik	C	-3	27
Rhodes	C	13	55
Rio de Jan.	C	26	79
Rome	C	9	48
Sarajevo	M	-1	30
Singapore	S	24	75
Stockholm	C	4	39
Strasbourg	C	12	54
Sydney	S	26	77
Tenerife	S	23	73
Tokyo	C	8	46
Toronto	C	0	32
Tunis	F	14	57
Vancouver	C	4	39
Venice	M	0	32
Vienna	C	-3	27
Warsaw	C	6	43
Washington	C	-1	30
Wellington	n/a	22	72
Zurich	C	11	52

European weather outlook

Scandinavia:
Denmark will be windy with bright spells and showers, although longer spells of rain will affect the extreme south. Norway and Sweden will be more wintry with coastal rain and snow edging north. A very large range in temperature from 7C in Denmark to minus 16C north of the Arctic Circle, but Oslo and Stockholm should creep just above freezing.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland:
The Benelux and northern Germany will be overcast and mild with showery bursts of rain and a blustery wind. Southern Germany, Austria and Switzerland will be much more unsettled with some sunshine, although low-lying valleys will have early freezing fog. Max temp 7-10C.

France:
The southern half of the country will be dry with some sunshine after any early fog and frost have cleared. Central, western and northern France will be more overcast with a threat of rain. Max temp ranging from 7C in the east to 16C on the Riviera.

Spain and Portugal:
Southern and eastern regions will be mostly dry and settled with any early mist and ground frost lifting to leave some sunshine, but it will be quite cold away from the Mediterranean coast. Central, northern and western Iberia will be much more unsettled with a lot of cloud and showers. Highest temperatures will range from just 6C in the interior north to 16C on the Mediterranean coast.

Italy:
Mostly dry and bright, but overnight fog may persist all day in low-lying northern areas. Max temp 7-12C, but lower in foggy areas.

Greece:
Fine and settled with good sunny periods. Max temp 11-14C.

Television and radio

BBC 1

7.00am Children's BBC: Fireman Sam. 7.20 Teletubbies. 8.15 Christmas Tooral. 8.45 Fidge. 9.10 Taz-Mania. 9.35 Rugrats. 10.00 Student Bodies. 10.20 50/50. 10.45 Teletubbies. 11.20 News; Regional News and Weather. 11.30 FILM: The Black Hole. Sci-fi drama with Anthony Perkins and Maximilian Schell. 1.00 Party of a Lifetime. 1.30 Laughing for Ages. 2.00 News; Regional News and Weather. 2.10 Neighbours. 2.40 FILM: Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Sci-fi drama starring William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, Catherine Hicks, DeForest Kelley and Jacque Dechen. 4.35 The World's Strongest Man. 5.20 Oddballs. 5.35 Neighbours. 5.50 Final Score. 6.15 News; Regional News and Weather. 6.35 Big Break. 7.05 FILM: Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Adventure starring Harrison Ford, Sean Connery, Denholm Elliott and Alison Doody. 9.00 EastEnders. 9.30 Paddington Green. 10.00 Miss Believing Badly. 10.45 Harry Enfield's Yule Log Chums. 11.25 News; Regional News and Weather. 11.45 Match of the Day. 1.10 FILM: Too Late the Hero. Second World War drama starring Michael Caine, Cliff Robertson, Henry Andrews and Ian Bannen. 3.15 Weather. 3.20 BBC News 24.

BBC 2

7.10am FILM: Miracle of the Bells. 9.05 FILM: Young at Heart. Musical with Frank Sinatra. 11.00 Perfectly Frank. 11.05 The West. 12.20 The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures: Staying Alive – The Body in Balance. 1.20 Cricket: The Ashes. 2.00 Racing from Chepstow. 4.00 FILM: The Kids and the Fearless. Adventure with Frank Sinatra, Cary Grant and Sophia Loren. 5.10 Carrfagus at Christmas. 7.00 Dance Night. 7.05 Dance Ballerina Dance. 7.55 Torvill and Dean. 8.05 You Make Me Feel Like Dancing. 8.55 Spot Ballroom. 9.40 The Magic of Dance. 9.55 Intents. 9.40 Eric and Ernie. 9.45 The Art of Tourist. 10.55 Nuzzle. 10.55 Clubbing. 11.25 FILM: Strictly Ballroom. Comic romance with Paul Mercurio and Tara Morice. 12.55 FILM: A Chorus Line. Music drama with Michael Douglas, Alyson Reed and Terrence Mann. 2.50 Weather. 2.55 Close.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

7.00am World News. 7.25 World Weather. 7.30 Badger and Badger. 7.45 Blue Peter. 8.10 Bright Sparks. 8.40 Ready, Steady, Cook. 9.05 Style Challenge. 9.40 Change That. 10.05 Kilroy. 10.45 EastEnders. 11.15 Songs of Praise Christmas Special. 12.00 Fat Man in France. 12.30 Ready, Steady, Cook. 1.00 Can't Cook, Won't Cook. 1.30 BBC Proms 1998. 2.40 BBC Proms 1998. 3.50 Style Challenge. 4.10 Noddy in England. 4.40 Blue Peter. 5.05 Bright Sparks. 5.30 Wildlife. 6.00 World News. 6.25 World Weather. 6.30 Ready, Steady, Cook. 7.00 EastEnders. 7.30 Gary Rhodes. 8.00 Citizen Smith. 8.30 The Goodies. 9.00 Gallowglass. 10.00 World News and Business Report. 10.25 World Weather. 10.30 BBC Proms 1998. 11.40 The Inspector Alleyn Mysteries. 1.30 Dad. 2.00 Between the Lines. 2.50 Abroad in Britain. 3.20 Legendary Trails: In the Footsteps of Buddha. 4.10 Common as Muck. 5.00 The Onedin Line. 5.55 Moon and Sno.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

7.00am World News and Weather. 7.30 World Living: Earth Report. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World News and Weather. 9.30 World Review '98. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Hard Talk. 11.00 World News and Weather. 11.30 World Living: Top Gear. 12.00 The World Today. 1.00 The World Today. 1.30 World Review '98. 2.00 World News. 2.15 World Business Report and Weather. 2.30 The World Today. 3.00 World Living: The Big Detch. 4.00 World News and Weather. 4.30 Hard Talk. 5.00 World News and Weather. 5.30 World Review '98. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 World Living: Earth Report. 7.00 The World Today. 8.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World News and Weather. 9.30 World Review '98. 10.00 World News. 10.30 World Business Report and Weather. 10.30 World Living: Fanter Your Seatbelt. 11.00 World News. 11.15 Europe Direct. 12.00 World News and Weather. 12.30 World Business Report. 12.45 Asia Today and Weather. 1.00 World News and Weather. 1.30 World Living: Earth Report. 2.00 News and Weather. 2.30 Asia Today. 2.45 World Business Report. 3.00 News and Weather. 3.30 World Review '98. 4.00 World News and Weather. 4.30 Asia Today. 4.45 World Business Report. 5.00 News and Weather. 5.30 World Review '98. 6.00 News and Weather. 6.30 World Review '98.

Radio 4

93.4-94.6 MHz 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am Today. 10.00 Start the Week. 10.45 Serial: Peter Pan and Wendy. 10.45 (LW) Daily Service. 11.00 Women's Hour. 12.00 Dear Peter Pan. 12.30 My Gatey Gits. 1.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast. 1.03 News. 1.04 You and Yours. 2.00 The World at One. 2.30 Counterpoint. 3.00 The Archers. 3.15 Afternoon Play: Open Secrets. 4.00 Money Box Live. 4.30 The Small Ad. 4.45 Nay, Ivy, Nay. 5.00 The Food Programme. 5.30 Taming World. 6.00 PM. 6.54 Shipping Forecast. 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.30 I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue. 8.00 The Archers. 8.15 Front Row. 8.45 Under One Roof. 9.00 Brass Banny. 9.30 Analysis. 10.00 A Wolf to the North: Fear. 10.30 Start the Week. 11.00 The World Tonight. 11.45 Book at Bedtime: Five Dahls. 12.00 Radio 4 Appeal. 12.02 Late Night on 4. The Man Without the Middle. 12.30 The Bells of Russia. 1.00 News. 1.30 The Late Book: The Restraint of Beasts. 1.45 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service. 5.20 Test Match Special – Australia v England. 6.30 World News. 6.35 Shipping Forecast. 6.40 Inshore Forecast. 6.45 Prayer for the Day. 6.47 Farming Today.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

5.00am News. 5.15 Off the Shelf: Colombo. 5.30 The Vintage Chart Show. 6.00 News. 6.10 Pause for Thought. 6.15 Pick of the Year. 10.00 News; (648 only) News in German. 10.05 World Business Report. 10.15 Record News. 10.30 Westney Access. 10.45 Sports Round-Up. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Omnibus. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Jazzmakers. 1.00 News. 1.05 World Business Report. 1.15 British Today. 1.30 Seven Days. 1.45 Sports Round-Up. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 News. 3.05 Outlook. 3.30 Planet 2000. 4.00 World News; (648 only) News in German. 4.05 Sports Roundup. 4.15 Westney Access. 4.30 Electronic Jukebox. 5.00 News. 5.15 Seven Days. 5.30 Insight; (648 only) News in German. 5.45 British Today. 5.50 Europe Today. 6.30 World Business Report. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Straits of Britain 1998; (648 only) News in German. 8.00 News Summary. 8.20 Outlook. 8.35 Pause for Thought. 8.30 Multitrack: Hit List. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 News. 10.05 World Business Report. 10.15 British Today. 10.30 Tying the Knot. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Insight. 11.45 Sports Round-Up. 12.00 News. 12.05 Outlook. 12.30 Multitrack Hit List. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Westney. 1.45 British Today. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 Seven Days. 2.45 Wild Tales. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 On Screen. 4.00 News. 4.05 World Business Report. 4.15 Sports Round-Up. 4.30 Weianhet. 5.00 The World Today. 6.00 The World Today.

Sky Premier

● Astra

7.00 Back to the Future Part III. 9.00 Mrs Winterbourne. 10.50 Dragonheart. 12.35 Hamlet. 2.40 Mrs Winterbourne. 4.25 Barry Norman's Film Night. 5.15 Back to the Future Part II. Adventure with Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd. 7.15 Dragonheart. Fantasy adventure with Dennis Quaid and Dennis Thewlis. 9.00 Independence Day. Sci-fi epic with Jeff Goldblum, Will Smith, Bill Pullman and Randy Quaid. 11.30 Absolute Power. Thriller with Clint Eastwood. 1.55 The Great White Hype. Comedy with Samuel L Jackson. 3.35 Dead Silence. 4.35 The Rich Man's Wife.

Sky MovieMax

● Astra

7.00 The Way to Dusty Death. 8.00 The Associate. 11.00 James and the Giant Peach. 12.30 That's Right, You're Wrong. 2.05 They Won't Believe Me. 4.00 The Way to Dusty Death. 6.00 The Associate. 8.00 James and the Giant Peach. Fantasy with Joanne Lumley. 9.30 White Squall. Drama with Jeff Bridges and John Savage. 12.00 Maximum Security. 1.30 Box of Moonlight. 3.20 Big Trouble in Little China. 5.00 Touched by Evil.

Sky Cinema

● Astra

5.00 Mr and Mrs Smith. 7.00 The Sea Wolves. Drama with Gregory Peck and Roger Moore. 9.00 7ds. Drama with Michael Caine and Jack Hawkins. 11.15 The Name of the Rose. Drama with Sean Connery and Christian Slater. 1.55 Monsieur Hawkins. 3.05 The Scarlet Claw. 4.35 Hollywood Hall of Fame: Bing Crosby. 4.55 House of Seven Gables.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 Scottish Football. 9.30 Racing News. 10.00 Aerobics Dr Bob. 10.30 Soccer Extra: Bank Holiday Special. 1.00 Sports Centre: Bank Holiday Special. 5.30 Football League Review. 6.00 Boxing: Knockouts of '98. 8.30 Sports Centre. 9.00 Monday Night Football Special. 10.30 Boxing: Knockouts of '98. 11.30 Sports Centre. 11.45 Football League Review. 12.45 Figure Skating. 2.45 Monday Night Football Special. 4.15 Sports Centre. 4.30 Close.

Sky Sports 3

● Astra

9.00 International Cricket – Live. 4.00 International Cricket. 8.30 Fish TV. 7.30 International Cricket. 11.30 Boxing Superbouts. 12.30 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.30 Extreme Sports. 10.30 Cross-Country Skiing. 11.00 Women's Alpine Skiing. 12.00 Alpine Skiing – Live. 1.30 We Love... Football. 2.30 Alpine Skiing. 4.00 Alpine Skiing. 4.30 Live Women's Alpine Skiing. 5.30 Cross-Country Skiing – Live. 6.30 Women's Alpine Skiing – Live. 8.00 Ski-Jumping. 9.30 Boxing. 10.30 Equestrianism – Live. 11.30 Alpine Skiing. 12.00 Football. 2.00 Close.

Sky 1

● Astra

8.00 Games World. 9.30 Street Sharks. 10.00 The Simpsons. 10.30 Earthworm Jim. 11.00 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys. 12.00 The New Adventures of Superman. 1.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show. 2.00 Days of Our Lives. 3.00 Sally Jessy Raphael. 4.00 Jenny Jones. 5.00 Best of Guilty! 6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 7.00 Married with Children. 7.30 Friends. 8.00 The Simpsons. 8.30 The Simpsons. 9.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 10.00 Sliders. 11.00 South Park. 11.30 Married With Children. 12.00 Friends. 12.30 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 1.30 Highlander: The Series. 2.30 Long Play.

National Geographic

● Astra

8.00 Encounters with Whales. 8.30 Buddha on the Silk Road. 10.00 Natural Born Killers: Jaguar – Year of the Cat. 11.00 Tribal Voice. 12.00 Life on the Line. 12.30 Lights! Camera! Bugs! 1.00 Mysteries Underground. 2.00 Close.

UK Gold

● Astra

8.00 Crossroads. 8.30 Neighbours. 8.55 EastEnders. 9.25 The Bill. 10.00 The Bill. 10.30 Pride and Prejudice. 11.50 Angels. 12.00 Dallas. 12.55 Neighbours. 1.20 EastEnders. 2.00 Pride and Prejudice. 3.00 Dallas. 3.55 The Bill. 4.25 The Bill. 4.55 EastEnders. 5.55 Carry On Girls. 7.45 Keeping Up Appearances. 8.15 Ever Decreasing Circles. 8.55 Butterflies. 10.00 One Foot in the Grave. 10.40 Men Behaving Badly. 11.20 Bottom. 12.00 The Bill. 12.30 The Bill. 1.00 'Allo, 'Allo! 1.55 Ever Decreasing Circles. 2.30 Waiting for God. 3.25 Only When I Laugh. 3.55 Shopping with Screenshop.

Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

8.00 Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures. 8.30 Walker's World. 9.00 Connections 2 by James Burke. 9.30 Jurassics. 10.00 Animal Doctor. 7.30 Shark Island. 8.30 Beyond 2000. 9.00 Wilder Discovery: Zambezi Shark. 10.00 Hammerheads. 11.00 Jaws in the Med. 12.00 Shelter: The Real Story. 1.00 Pedal for the Planet. 2.00 Connections 2 by James Burke. 2.30 Ancient Warriors. 3.00 Close.

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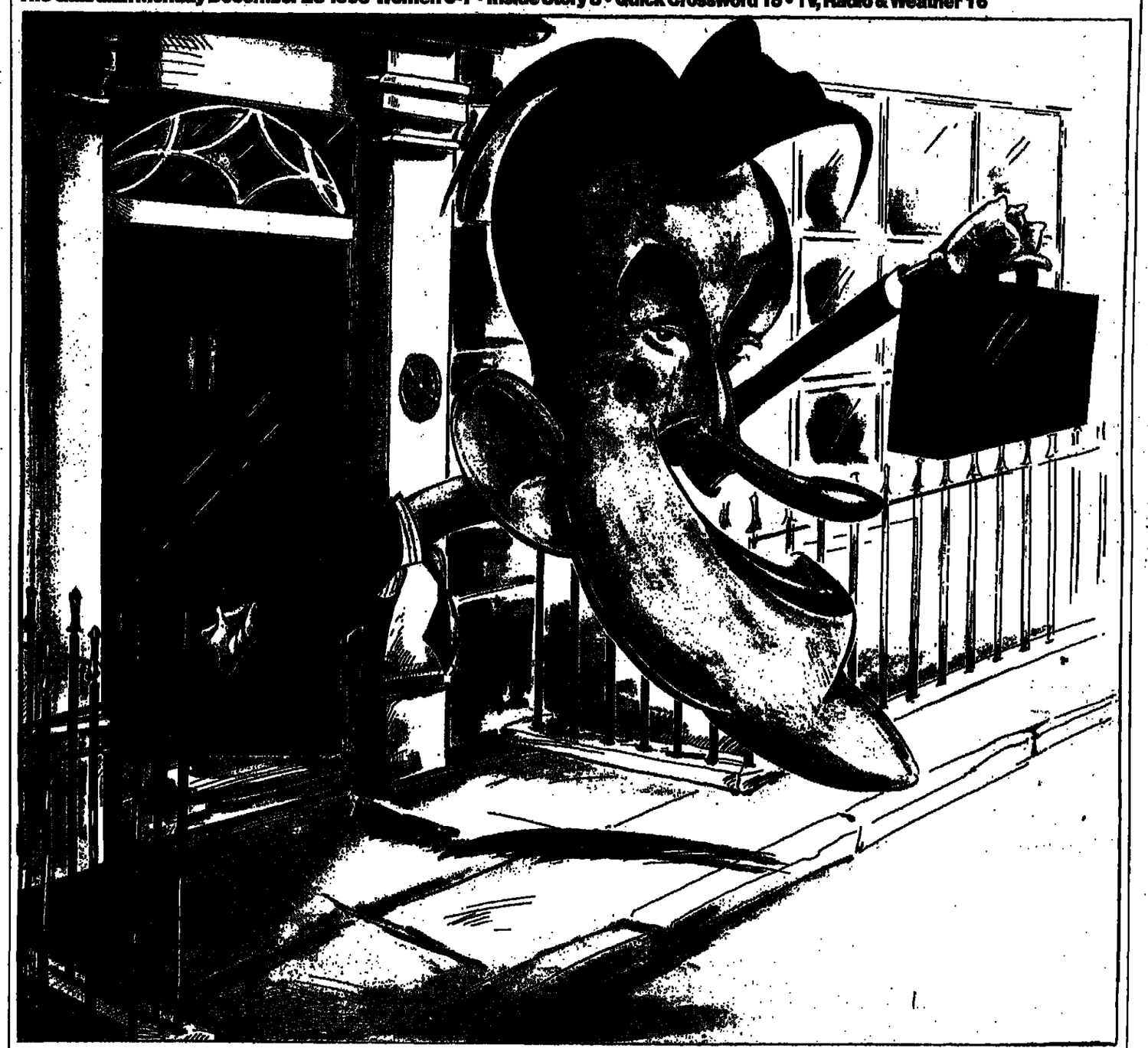
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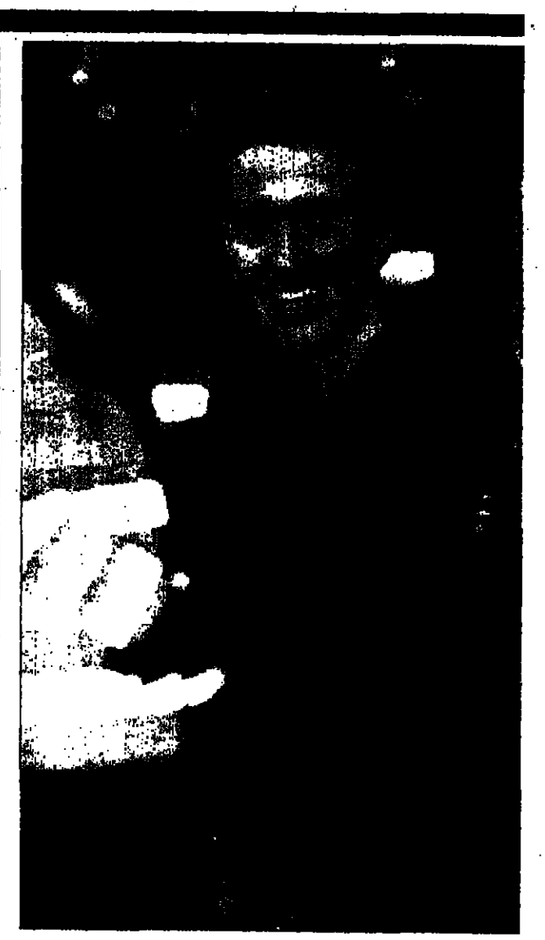
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Remember me?

From disgraced ex-minister to Chancellor in just 30 months. Simon Hoggart on the remarkable return of Peter Mandelson





Meet the prince of light

Was it the passionate party conference plea to stand by Britain's poorest, or the moving six-part TV series on Hartlepool? As Peter Mandelson completes one of the most remarkable comebacks of all time, **Simon Hoggart** reports on the ingenious operation that transformed a fallen symbol of greed and arrogance into one of our best-loved political figures

June 29, 2001

The new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Peter Mandelson, stepped from his council flat in Tower Hamlets and told the waiting press: "In Gordon Brown, the country has just lost its finest post-war Chancellor. I myself" — he paused for a discreet sniffle — "have lost my dearest friend in politics. It will be my honour to pursue many of his policies."

"Which ones?" shouted a reporter. Mr Mandelson paused again. "Serving oriental nibbles rather than smoked salmon roulades at the Number 11 summer party is most definitely one," he said firmly, before climbing into a ministerial car for the first time in nearly three years and barking at his chauffeur: "Whelan, take me to Downing Street!"

It's hard to recall how shattered Mandelson was in those terrible days at the end of 1998. His career seemed not just stalled but wrecked, fit only to be shredded in newspaper columns. Most Labour colleagues were gleeful in private and many in public, too. His head was metaphorically spiked on the railings round Westminster, a terrible warning to anyone else so clever and so arrogant.

But yesterday's vindication — the culmination of one of the most astonishing political comebacks of modern times — was no happy accident. It had been planned with care and cunning and in immense detail. The story of Operation MacArthur (from the American general who famously said "I came through and I shall return") starts on January 10, 1999, less than three weeks after the Guardian published news of the fatal loan from Geoffrey Robinson.

That Sunday morning a small ad hoc think-tank of friends and advisers assembled at the home of the best-selling novelist Robert Harris. Harris, a close friend of Mandelson (and one who blamed himself for introducing the minister to the exotic and expensive delights of Notting Hill) lives with his family in a superb Victorian rectory overlooking the Kennet & Avon canal. After a stroll down the towpath in crisp winter sunshine, the team sipped pre-lunch champagne as they began to devise the long fight back.

The plotters included Philip Gould, the Labour Party's advertising guru. Benjamin Wegg-Prosser, Mandelson's hyper-loyal young aide, since renamed Ben Wegg, was there, together with Donald Macintyre, the Independent columnist and writer of Mandelson's authorised biography, who suddenly found himself in the position of a man with a vanload of fresh turkeys on Boxing Day.

Gould had also invited London's flashiest, and some thought most talented, advertising man, Robin Wight. Mandelson winced when he heard that Wight had once been a Tory candidate, but Gould said curtly: "Since when did anyone's political views ever bother you? He persuaded British men to drink Carling Black Label, and even pay for the privilege, so he might just be able to sell you."

"We are starting," Gould said, "from the very bottom. Last week I managed to convene an impromptu focus group. Things are bad. 'Arrogant southern ponce' and 'makes Jeremy Beadle look sincere' were among the kinder judgments."

"Look at it," said Wight, who was wearing a lurid bow-tie that resembled the drapes in a Turkish harem, "not as a resignation, but as a product recall. That can leave a brand stronger than ever; take Perrier and Tylenol after their contamination scares. Labour has a fantastic brand identity — caring, compassionate and honest. You have to reclaim that, but for yourself."

"Your USP," Wight went on, "is that every single thing you do now is going to be in the media. You've got a fantastic opportunity to re-brand yourself — entirely at the media's expense."

"So we start by getting you up in Hartlepool more often," Gould said. "No more weekends swanning round Notting Hill delis. I've spoken to the local football club, and they're happy for you to help train the lads in their Community Football scheme. They're as desperate as you and they need all the help they can get."

Mandelson groaned as Gould continued: "Then tour round the old folks' homes and ask if they have any odd jobs. Ben'll tell the reptiles. You, spattered with paint, smiling at some old duck; we could get that on every Sunday front page. Magic." He beamed with pleasure.

Mandelson shuddered slightly: "But what about Westminster?"

Comeback trail ... Mandelson finds his roots in Hartlepool (above left), talks policy with Melinda Messenger (centre) and goes back to grassroots with fellow delegates at the Labour Party Conference (above right)

PHOTOMONTAGES: ROGER TOOTH

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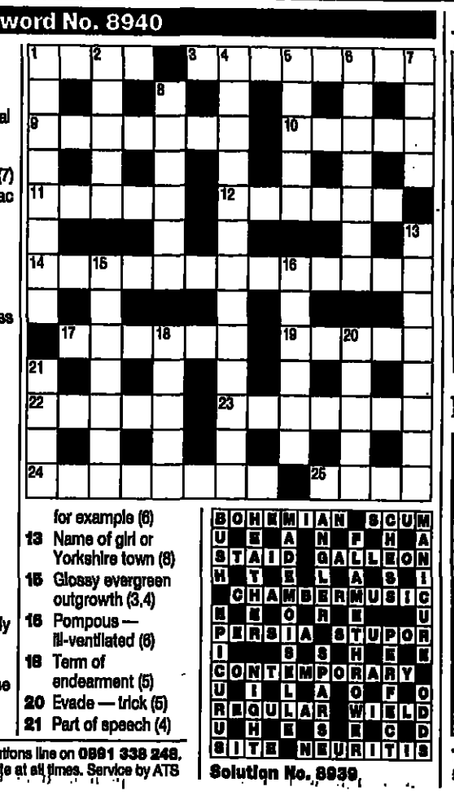
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Across

1 Russian parliament (4)
3 Three-dimensional artist (6)
9 Preliminary or satirical drawing (7)
10 Sign of the Zodiac (5)
11 Praise (5)
12 Yarn (6)
14 Descent hard to arrest (8,5)
17 Short-sightedness (6)
19 Excessive (5)
22 Happening (5)
23 Heathen (7)
24 Apparently impossible to solve (6)
25 Raise troops or money (4)

Down

1 Lessen (6)
2 Deserve (5)
4 Dismay (13)
5 Organ of the body (5)
6 Violent storm (7)
7 Covering of house (4)
8 Lump of cream, for example (6)
13 Name of girl or Yorkshire town (6)
15 Glossy evergreen outgrowth (3,4)
16 Pompous — ill-ventilated (6)
18 Term of endearment (5)
20 Evade — trick (5)
21 Part of speech (4)



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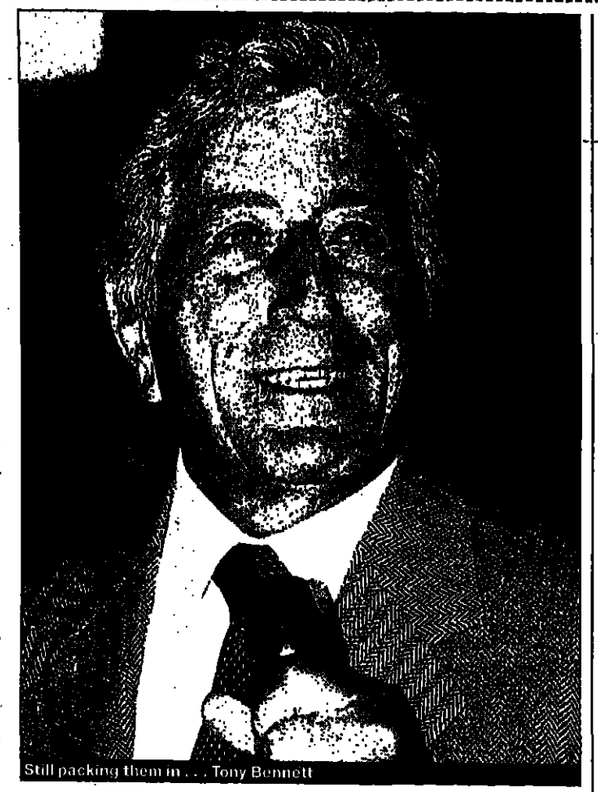
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New York stories



Michael Ellison on the decline of the glamorous nightspot • Mosquito madness

Cheesy on toast



Still packing them in . . . Tony Bennett

New York really does like to celebrate its own. How else could one explain why the music of Billy Joel seeps from the hi-fi speakers of just about every joint in town? He's one of theirs.

Then there's The Bobby Darin Story, which most sentient beings with long memories might have thought went like this: made some rather lame records to help fill the fallow years between the decline of rock 'n' roll and the emergence of the Beatles and the Stones. Not so. He is such a significant cultural figure that his life is running as if on a public service television loop tape.

Death has always delivered a powerful surge to an artist's record sales but has tended to limit personal appearances. Now even that, or at least the appearance of it, has changed. Any week you like you can see the admittedly outstanding Mingus Big Band (without Mingus, he's dead); the Gil Evans Orchestra (without Evans, he's dead); less frequently the Jazz Messengers (without Blakey, he's dead); the Count Basie Orchestra (without Basie, he's dead; or Sun Ra's Arkestra (without Sun Ra, he's dead).

Otherwise, the only practitioners of America's sole indigenous art form who can be certain of a spot at the leading clubs such as the Village Vanguard, the Blue Note or Birdland seem to be those who can demonstrate that they once played with Miles or Coltrane. This music, especially in a place that prides itself on being a jazz city, is meant to ring the changes.

Cabaret and middle-of-the-road is supposed to have that franchise on the past, or what it would prefer to call the timeless. So it is a pity that they are closing one of the few glories of the cabaret world and, much worse, abolishing Frank Sinatra.

Now, let's keep a sense of proportion about this. There is something rather repellent about the whole idea of cabaret, overpriced tickets, overpriced drinks, overdressed patrons and over-the-top singers all coming together to decay a little in a mist of nostalgia. But that's part of its allure and something which is harder to do now that Rainbow and Stars, New York's leading cabaret, has just gone dewy-eyed to the last wobbly note of its final crooner. The Rainbow Room next door has shut too.

Even if you accept all the reservations and find easy-listening music anything but, the view at night of Manhattan from the 65th floor of the General Electric building in the Rockefeller Centre is enough to change the mind, if only for a moment, of even the most dowdy bohemian. The lease has changed hands and the venue is to become a corporate entertainment palace. No more Tony Bennett, who performed at the club's opening in 1989, no more Rosemary Clooney and no more Vic Damone. Boo-hoo.

All right, so Frank Sinatra has not quite been eradicated, but the plug was pulled at the weekend on his most consistent champion. For years the WQEW disc jockey and author Jonathan Schwartz has had a four-hour Saturday show playing one Sinatra record after another.

Why, only a few weeks ago Time Out New York listed this as one of the 101 reasons to be glad you live here.

You might have thought that in a city with about 100 radio stations there would be room for this sort of eccentric indulgence. Not any more, not since the clock struck 12 last night and WQEW surrendered its lease to a Disney-operated kiddies' channel.

Have you ever felt your bus pulled into the station 25 years late?

Bitten by the metropolitan bugs

Welcome to the Third World. I know, this may throw you a little. New York is the official capital of the world and never stops telling you so. But consider what happens when you arrive at Kennedy airport. No one minds that their initial greeting is courtesy of a poster of the Muppets. But why is there no rail link from JFK to Manhattan? It is not, as you might suspect, so that cab drivers can demand $45 for the ride advertised in their vehicles as $30. No, according to the Port Transport Authority there is no rail link because it should have been built in the 1940s. This explanation would be worthy of Harare were it not so much easier to get through immigration there.

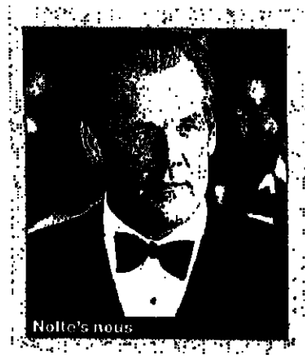
When you do reach Manhattan you may well find yourself on the Upper East Side — yes, I know that more celebrities and media types live on the Upper West Side, but that's their problem. The Upper East Side has the most expensive stores, the swankiest real estate and New York's densest concentration of cultural centres. It also has a plague of mosquitoes. "It's December and we are talking about an infestation problem. Our blocks are totally overrun by bloodsuckers," said Marc Charney as he lugged a heavy-duty $55 mosquito net into his apartment.

Up to 100 at a time accumulate around lightbulbs in the heart of the mosquito zone, 90th to 92nd streets between First and Second Avenues. They've looked everywhere but no one can find the stagnant water that must be to blame.

I would be even more sympathetic if I did not have my own lifestyle problems to grapple with. What's wrong with a few mosquitoes? I turned on the lights in our apartment the other day and the whole lot fused. That's nothing to worry about, it happens all the time and at least the switches haven't quite come off the wall yet.

The overflowing toilets and blocked sinks? Everybody has those. No, it's our very own plague of flies the size of cockroaches that bothers me a little.

But it is gratifying to learn that there has never been a public health hazard in this apartment before and the wildlife helps with the accelerated education program we have selected for our two-year-old. No need to waste time at Bronx Zoo when you have all this on the wrong side of your doorstep. Talking of the doorstep . . . no, another time.



Nolte's nous

Charlie Rose watch: the elegantly tousselled, furrow-browed host of public service telly is still at it. Nick Nolte, who appears in The Thin Red Line — that rarest of things — a new Terrence Malick movie explained to the Proper Charlie that the director likes to shoot a scene, leave it unfinished and then return to it some weeks later, perhaps to include a tree which has taken his fancy. "And is there a lesson in that for all of us?" demanded Mr Rose. Oh, obviously.

Noises Off

Divorced from reality

Charlie O's, Penn Station's watering hole for commuters trying to find a reason not to get the next train home to Long Island. A thick-set chain smoker, dressed in a dark suit, white shirt and red tie, discusses home improvements with a man in a grey sweatshirt, denims and workboots, a gold chain round his neck.

Thick-set Smoker: My elder daughter, she came back to live with us, me and my present wife. I got no problem with that, she gives me some money. What I got a problem with is some capital gains-type of shit.

Gold Chain: My son — I got a boy of seven, the only son I ever had — I said to my second wife if you can't accept him there's the door. We divorced about a year later,

TSS: My youngest son, he started high school in September and by Thanksgiving his report card was so bad and why's that? My ex-wife's boyfriend, that's why.

GC: My last wife, we got divorced nine years ago and to this day her parents still send me birthday and Christmas cards. It makes you feel, like, you're a good man. I'm getting married again in June. It'll work out.

TSS: Yeah? My last wife, she wanted the other guy, but who is that asshole? I'm a very emotional man and the kids were young, they lived with me. I know how to make a home, how to fix stuff.

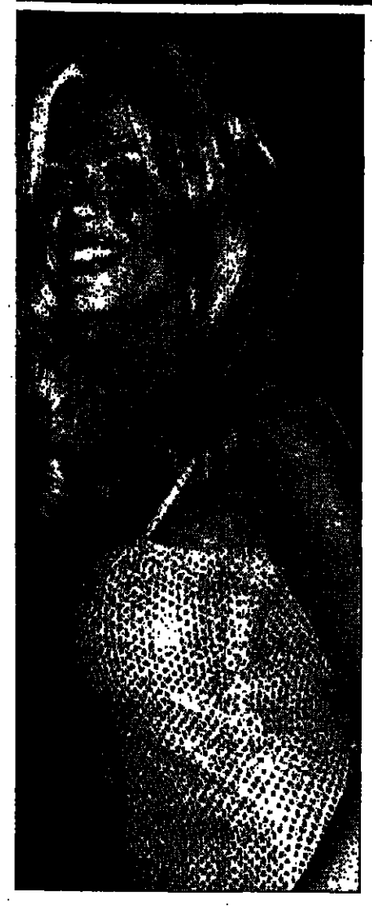
GC: But you wear a tie.

TSS: But I used to work with mechanics, plumbers. When I see a guy make a wall I want him to take his time over it, make it perfect.

GC: Plumbing, yeah, that terrifies me. I'm a tiler, I work with tiles and people expect me to know all about plumbing. I know certain aspects of the job. Toilet bowls? Easy. Sinks? Easy. But showers, I don't know how to do that.

TSS: No, I don't know how to do that either.

Athlete's foot and tennis elbow are irritating afflictions but spare a thought for the soul-funk singer Rick James. When he passed out after a gig the medics thought he might have a drug-related problem. On closer inspection it turned out that he'd had a stroke after breaking two blood vessels, the result of "rock 'n' roll neck" caused by "repeated whipping of the head". Previously James could be accused only of having a brass neck after pumping out such terrible dross.





"Ye-e-e-e-s", said Macintyre. "Er, I mean, how can I, um, put this? Some of the comrades there might not be, what can I say, quite as appreciative of your talents as us in this room. You've got to admit you've done a bad thing and you're sorry."

"You'll have to be incredibly nice, incredibly open and incredibly friendly to almost everyone," interrupted Gould. "I mean, when you gave [the political journalist] Julia Langdon's daughter your autograph and said: 'Next time tell your mother to write something nice about the Government.' None of that. I know it'll hurt."

Mandelson glumly drained his champagne. "What about [Paul] Routledge? His unspeakable, unmitigated, unauthorised biography got me into this."

"I've had a really good idea," said Wegg-Prosser, "let's do what we did with Matthew Norman [the Guardian's diarist]. We'll turn up at his house unexpectedly and thank him." "Thank him?" Mandelson almost shouted. "Yes," said Wegg-Prosser, "Thank him for making you take the path of honesty and compassion. I'll take the pictures."

"As for Labour MPs," said Gould, "Now you've got the time, engage with them. Pretend you care what they think. And throw away at least one bleeper. That time you bought Reg Pargiter a pint then said, 'Very sorry, can't join you, I've just got an urgent meeting.' Urrrgh."

"Where should I live?" asked Mandelson, knowing he would get the answer he dreaded most. "Sell the house, now," said Wight. "Repay the loan. Buy a house in Hartlepool — you could do that out of your current account. I'd say, sleep on the couch in Frank Dobson's council flat. At least you'd get some filthy jokes to please the lads in the Stranger's. But Mrs Dobson might object . . ."

The success of Operation MacArthur was noticed almost immediately. Everyone commented on Mandelson's sudden warmth, openness and vulnerability. He spoke about the Government with passionate loyalty, but with candour, too. He was in constant demand on radio and TV, where his good-humoured confession of misdeeds and refusal to let interviewers rile him won praise from former friends and foes alike. When John Humphrys said: "With all due respect, what right have you, of all people, to complain about sleaze?" he replied: "None whatever. What I did wasn't merely a misjudgment, it was an act of terrible greed. But the difference is, as Tony Blair said, I paid the price, immediately and willingly."

Wealthy friends were unceremoniously dumped. Instead he was seen with popular icons, chatting to Melinda Messenger in a pub for her Channel 5 show Silicone Valley. On Newsnight, he "outed" the columnist Matthew Parris, revealing to a shocked public that Parris had a secret wife and family in Oxshott.

But his greatest achievement of 1999 was the speech he made at the Labour conference in Bournemouth. He began: "As you know, I have had a lot more time on my hands lately. Time which I have used to learn more about the people I have the honour to represent. It has changed me. The other day I went back to Soho House [a chic London dining club] for the first time in ages, and I made a mistake. I pointed to the guacamole dip and asked, 'could you pass those mushy peas, please?' " The roar of delighted laughter told him he had won the audience.

He followed with a moving affirmation. He described a family he knew in Hartlepool whom he called the Ainscloughs — Dad out of work, teenage son dropped out of school, and a Mum forced to work nights cleaning for the minimum wage. "If the Labour Party, our Labour Party, can't help the Ainscloughs," he said, "then it has no point in continuing.

> 'Look at it not as a resignation, but as a product recall. That can leave a brand stronger than ever'

"But we won't help them with soundbites. We won't help them by declaring 'you can't make the poor rich by making the rich poor,' or claiming that 'a rising tide lifts all boats'. It doesn't. Grotesque fat-cat salaries won't give Gordon Ainsclough a job or security for his old age. Tax breaks for the rich won't provide Darren with the education he needs. Pouring money into wealthy shareholders' pockets won't give Jackie 10 minutes' respite from her life of drudgery.

"The Tory leader, Señor Miguel Portillo, is wrong!" (He paused for a brief sneer, sending a frisson of fear round the hall, just like old times — then pulled himself quickly together.) "We are all in this together. And if we can't look at the Ainscloughs and say: "These people are my family too,' then we degrade and demean the very reason for our existence." He sat down to an utterly unfamiliar sound: roars of applause followed by a standing — indeed a stamping — ovation.

One rebellious Labour MP turned to his friend Bob Marshall-Andrews MP, and said: "Who's he fooling? He's still the same cynical, manipulative phoney." "Yes," Marshall-Andrews replied, "but now he's *our* cynical, manipulative phoney."

MacArthur continued to sweep all before it. The coruscating six-part TV series Mandelson's Hartlepool ("I don't mind admitting I sobbed" — Victor Lewis-Smith in London's Evening Standard newspaper). His decision to campaign openly — and successfully — for Ken Livingstone as Mayor of London. His triumphant election to Labour's National Executive in October 2000. Why I Care, the book in which he declared his faith, many sentences of which he wrote himself. The Junior Coach of the Year award from the Football Association in 2001.

Behind the scenes it was the top-secret, detailed and sophisticated explanation of why Gordon Brown's economic policies were leaving the country mired in recession that proved to Blair that he was too valuable to keep out any longer. (It was a common sight to watch Mandelson pitching neo-Keynesianism to the Prime Minister on his mobile, while insulating a pensioner's loft.)

His growing influence could hardly remain a secret for long — not least because Mandelson himself leaked the story that he had persuaded Blair to veto a central plank of Brown's economic strategy. Once the news was out, and had been carefully not denied by Alastair Campbell, Brown had no choice but to resign. "At least," his friend Geoffrey Robinson told him, "you can find time to marry Sarah now."

Mandelson for Prime Minister next? Nothing will be more eagerly discussed between now and Tony Blair's departure.

Pass notes

No 1323

Men Behaving Badly



All right Tony, mate? Yeah, thanks, Gary, mate. You all right?

Yeah, thanks, mate. You all right? Yeah, mate. Women, eh?

Yeah, women, mate. Can't live with them. Pass us another lager, mate. Too right, mate. Women — total mystery. The eternal feminine, as John-Paul Gaultier put it. I mean, the female orgasm — the little ladies were having a laugh with that one, eh, mate?

Good point, mate. By the way, shall we drop the "mate" for a bit? Yeah, mate. Sorry. I mean, yeah.

I mean — your women, they have words like *too* **and** *flip* **flop.** Yeah, while us men have mainly words. Words like spankathon and penalty shoot-out.

Spankathon. Good word. Too right. And todger. Don't forget that.

Anyway, Phwah! Look at the size of that. Phwah! What's that, mate? Your todger?

I'm not talking about todgers, mate. No, I mean the ratings. Yeah, 15.5 million watched us last Christmas. Probably more watched us this Christmas.

No doubt for what scriptwriter Simon Nye would call the a subtle delineation of new laddism, a comical critique, if you will, rather than a celebration. What a ponce, eh?

Total ponce, mate. Still — happy days, mate, even though you did sleep with my bird. Remember the first series on ITV? No mate. I wasn't in that. That was Harry Enfield. Then the BBC bought it up in 1994.

Anyway, it's the last ever Men Behaving Badly tonight. But we've done well out of arsing around in our flat. I'm off to appear in the film adaptation of Irvine Welsh's The Acid House. And you're never off the telly these days, mate. And Caroline Quentin's in Jonathan Creek. Life goes on. What about Leslie Ash, mate?

It's all been downhill since she was dry humped by Phil Daniels in Quadrophenia. Dry humped. Good words, mate.

Yeah, right. Perhaps we should grow up now. Steady on, mate.

Are you a Pass Master?
http://passnotes.guardian.co.uk

The Sabine Durrant Interview

Jon Snow
Moving on

He launches the revamped Channel 4 news next week. So he's short of time. For mother, daughters, feeding the guinea pig — but not for talking to Monica Lewinsky

Photograph by Eamonn McCabe

Jon Snow, the news presentor, can't stop to talk because he has a plane to catch. "I'm leaving in five minutes," he cries when I arrive at his house in Kentish Town. "I've got a taxi coming. Well, not a taxi, a motorbike. They're fantastic. Driven by retired policemen. They bring you a helmet and the gear. . . Brilliant. Saves me half an hour the other end."

Snow was off to Washington to cover Clinton's impeachment for Channel 4 News, and for discussions concerning his Monica Lewinsky interview (he has been granted a European exclusive). He was home four days later, missing his cousin Peter Snow's 60th birthday bash, but just in time to meet Peter's recently discovered illegitimate son. Then it was one night's sleep and straight back into the 7pm news, while also "pounding along" the new-look bulletin to be launched next week.

And all this over Christmas, when he has other commitments to negotiate, such as his work as chairman of the homeless charity New Horizon, builders to sort out at home (a kitchen extension), presents to buy for his partner and two daughters, and a visit to his elderly mother, suffering from Alzheimer's in an old people's home in Oxfordshire, "which I was supposed to do at the weekend. And couldn't." You can see how half an hour can make all the difference.

Snow, who is 51, is an anchor on the move. He talks about time continually. In the mornings, he runs to the shop to buy his kids' packed lunch, "because I've got to use every minute of that period to get them ready for school". He cycles to work because it's "quicker". When we finally met up, we popped round from his office to a nice café, where he greeted everybody like old friends, but he doesn't eat there often — "usually there isn't time".

He talked about his favourite activities (gardening, watercolours) but then he said, in exasperation, "How much time do I ever have for doing these things?" After a long tirade about the collapse of the extended family, he said: "This is something we all ought to be thinking about. What happened to all that leisure we were going to have at the end of the 20th century?"

There are people at Channel 4 News who think Jon Snow is deeply conservative, and there are people who think he is mad. He has worked there long enough (10 years) to prefer things done in a certain way. But he has also described himself as "the enemy within", who enjoys lobbing the odd "unpinned grenade" into discussions. The programme goes out at 7pm, but he arrives at 9.30am because "if you're not there at the beginning, you're dead". He likes the relaunch, in which he will move around Kirsty Young-style and cross his legs a lot, but he is surprised no one has accused it of "dumbing down". His nickname for some unexplained reason is Snargs.

Viewers see in him authority with a whiff of rebellion and a deep vein of conviction, the man in the sober suit with the Jackson Pollock-style ties, and awards for his work in Eritrea and El Salvador on his wall. He is the son of the Bishop of Whitby, was rusticated from Liverpool University for protesting about South Africa, and never went back. The worker with the addicted and homeless who got "too emotionally involved" and learnt "to put some kind of emotional lens" between himself and the victim. The reporter who became the presenter.

Several times he brought up the impossibility of objectivity ("How different it would be if you were approaching the story as a woman, or gay, or black") and everything he says or does, from the way he discusses the bombing in Iraq ("awful, push-button, let's destroy Saddam mentality") to the manner in which he wrote about his mother's dementia, seems informed by this.

Snow said: "You've got to be politically motivated. The motivation can come from the left or the right, but you've really got to be upset, annoyed, fired, enthused, amazed, amused by what you see." The day we met he was upset, etc by goings-on in Washington, still glowing from a special broadcast which had gone so well "it was like good sex".

"It's a witch-hunt!" he said. "And it says so much about the period in which we live. If we were in the middle of the cold war and he was commander of the western forces and the spooky, bogey commies were out there on the eastern front, in no way would we allow anybody to take his trousers off."

He is longing to meet Hillary Clinton — "more than anybody else" — who "must be the nearest thing to giving us real hope that there could be female leadership of the superpower". But he deflated a bit on Lewinsky. "Chequebook journalism," he called it rather sniffily. "You want to be regarded for your own qualities, not for notoriety, and at the moment, unless it's a very good interview, it'll be mere notoriety, won't it? It's not going to El Salvador and getting the definitive insight into America's involvement with the death squads, which I would say I am more proud of."

He is very tall, 6ft 4in, with a high forehead, beetly brows and an ecclesiastical nose, silver white hair and looks imperious as he sits across the café table, despite all the joshing with the waiters. He says that the cuttings file on him, "thankfully thin", is full of "garbage". He doesn't laugh much, though occasionally he makes a sort of harumph noise. He can't believe people still bring up that he was once engaged to Anna Ford or that he never married his long-term partner, lawyer Madeleine Colvin (that whiff of rebellion). "Surely people are more interested in is he gay or is he straight, as some of my viewers are. Some do think I'm gay. They write in and ask."

There has never been a Spitting Image puppet of him. He thinks he's "too bland", though perhaps just too easily confused with his more extravagantly gestured Newsnight cousin. The family resemblance has filtered through to Peter's illegitimate son, a Frenchman conceived in 1964 who got in touch with his father (who never knew of his existence) for the first time last year.

"Why he bothered to take a genetic test I don't know," Jon Snow said. "The nose, and the eyebrows and everything. And his personality is every inch a Snow without any environmental input." What is it to be every inch a Snow?" He harumphed. "Bombastic, rather overbearing and dominant. A really nice man, though."

> 'You've got to be upset, annoyed, fired, enthused, by what you see'

On his mother, Snow seems torn between the desire for openness which led him to write about her, and defensiveness. For Mothers And Sons, a collection of essays edited by Victoria Glendinning, he wrote an extraordinary piece about discovering that his mother had been bald since she was a girl ("this terrible, unmentionable thing"); about her lack of affection (judgmental and inflexible); and about her living death from Alzheimer's ("Emotionally within me she had died"). The article caused a big moral upset. His eldest brother, Tom, wrote to the papers furious at the indignity to his mother "defenceless in the face of such ghastly public retribution" and accusing Jon of "self-indulgence".

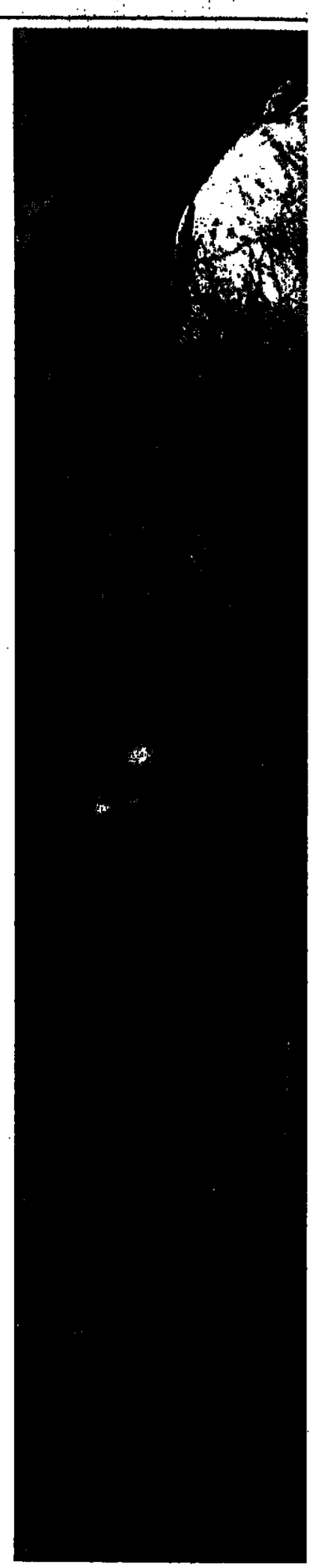
Joan Snow is still alive, "she just, well, goes on". Have the brothers patched things up? "Yup," replied Snow. He thinks it was that he wrote about finding his mother a home which caused the fuss. "People don't want to deal with it, the dreadful decay of old people and the awful lives that some of them live... I don't think farms full of dying old people is a terribly good idea, though it might be convenient." Could he not have had his mum to live with him?

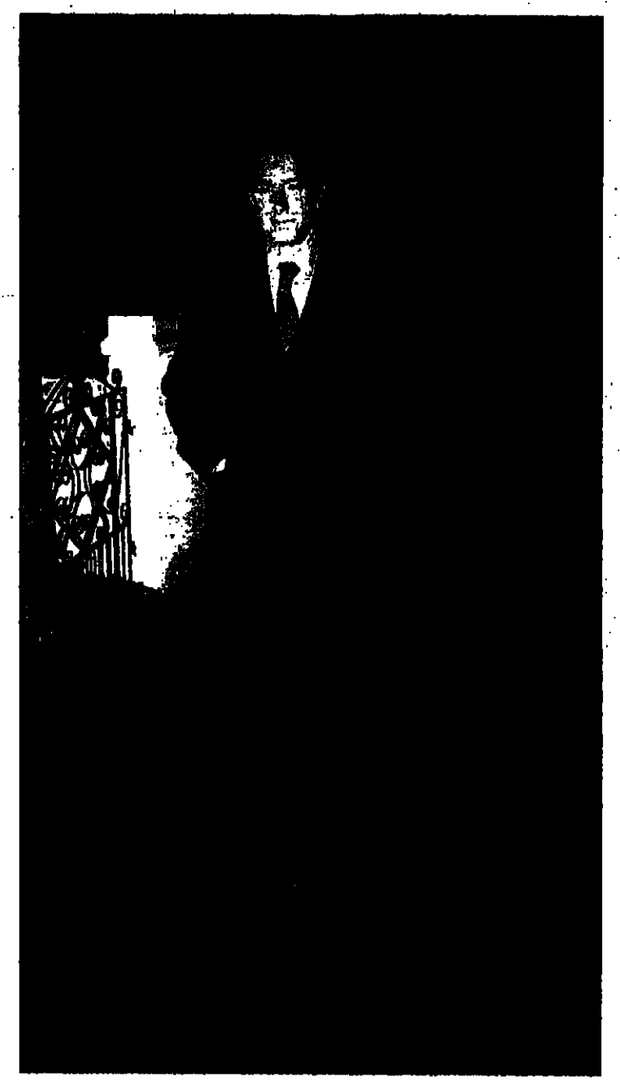
"No, I couldn't, because the extended family is dead. In Uganda, where I've just been, you could write about your mother and it would have no resonance, because the potty old woman in the mud hut at the back of the village is tended to morning, noon, and night by everybody. Granny's crackers four per cent of everybody's time is fine, but Granny's crackers 100 per cent of one person's time is very difficult to deal with. There is no time. And I don't feel guilty about it."

He goes on: "Look, I didn't set out to write any of this stuff. Victoria Glendinning said would you write about your mother? I didn't think about it until two months later when she said I need that piece by Monday and I found myself thinking what on earth am I going to say about Mummy. What I said was what came into my head. Did I feel better after I'd written it? I didn't feel bad to begin with. At the time I thought I was having a good time... It's just not the relationship that I have with my children."

It has struck him recently that he is the age now — "a good age" — that his father was when he was born. But his father was not one for running to the shops for KitKats. "I cannot remember my father running anywhere. He was enormous and if he ran we'd have heard it. So I think it's about how you are with your children. Do they consider you immobilised? Or do they regard you as somebody who can do absolutely everything?"

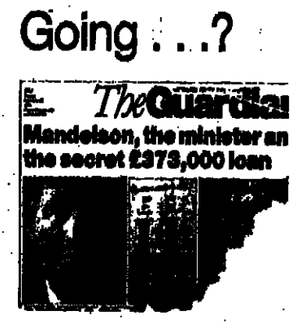
And how does he think his daughters regard him? "Probably as someone who is tangled up in the world in which he lives, but who loves them and who does feed the wretched guinea pig if it's cold in the morning. What a life." He had been stirring his espresso, but he stopped the spoon in its tracks. "I do feel guilty about the guinea pig."



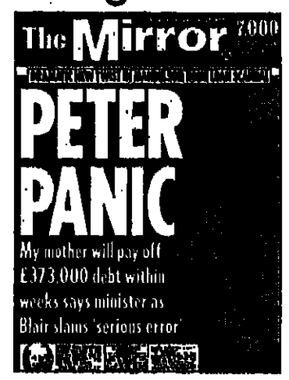


A fair cop

Roy Greenslade says Mandelson can't complain. The press just did its job









The supreme irony of the much vaunted arch-manipulator of the media being brought to heel by journalists shouldn't blind us to the fact that his departure proved that Peter Mandelson is one clever operator.

In extremis, with an unusually unanimous press baying for blood, people rarely think straight enough to do the right thing. Mandelson did. If he had stayed he might just have clung on but, as his resignation note implied, he and the Government would have suffered more and, in the end, he might well have been forced from the Cabinet anyway.

After resigning so quickly his career might yet regain its upward trajectory. All because, in his darkest hour, he gave the press what it wanted. Well, sought of. In a sense it was the other way round: he went of his own accord before the newspapers had the chance to mount a daily campaign calling for his head.

It's hard not to imagine that several editors would have preferred the opportunity to torment an increasingly beleaguered Mandelson over a period of weeks. Having found it so difficult to lay a glove on Tony Blair, they thought they saw an opening in his defences at last.

Okay, so Mandelson deserves praise for the way he handled the crisis, but it's equally important not to damn the press for exposing his secret financial arrangement with Geoffrey Robinson. However sore Blair's aides are at losing their influential friend and colleague, and they are, believe me, they shouldn't delude themselves or the public by suggesting it's all the press's fault.

People should not gain the impression that journalists did anything wrong by publishing details of Mandelson's "loan". That is why we exist: to tell the public what other people don't want them to know.

In the honourable tradition of muck-raking, the Mandelson/Robinson affair was genuine muck. Unlike the tawdry and prurient outing of homosexual ministers which preceded this scandal, the revelation about one minister lending another a colossal sum of money at a preferential rate of interest (with virtually no chance of regular repayment in the normal manner), was proper news.

Robinson, rightly or wrongly, has been accused of a string of questionable financial transactions. From the moment he came under such a sustained attack, Mandelson, then Minister Without Portfolio, should have informed Blair and the Cabinet Secretary about his loan. Even if it slipped his mind then he should have done so when being appointed Trade and Industry Secretary, particularly as the DTI launched an inquiry into Robinson's affairs. If we allow that the loan itself was a private matter between two friends dating back to their time in Opposition, the situation had changed. There was now a clear conflict of interest.

As with Lord Hoffman and the Pinochet fiasco, when such conflicts occur, they should be made public in order to dilute any possible feeling that a decision is tainted. If not, it's hardly surprising that the public will feel, despite claims of "insulation", that all wasn't as straight and honest as it appeared.

That's why we need a free press, to make all politicians and, just as importantly in a world ruled by international capital, all business people, accountable for their actions. Of course, this high-minded ideal is muckier and murkier in practice. It depends on leaks, whispers, attributable sources with their own agendas and whistle-blowers with attitude.

Getting at the truth, especially in our society with its penchant for secrecy and the continuing delay in implementing even a watered down Freedom of Information Act, is difficult. It does require the use of sometimes dubious methods to obtain information. As long as the story itself is in the wider public interest, then that is fair enough.

So we should not be diverted from the essential worth of the Mandelson loan affair by thinking that the story behind the story is of equal interest. It would indeed be nice to know how and why it came to our attention — who leaked it first on whose behalf and to whom — but the mechanics are largely irrelevant.

The story stands as an end it itself. Nor should we be drawn by government anger into blaming the messenger for the message. A vigilant press was doing its job.

Why should we be worried?. Because, from the moment Mandelson resigned, people who should know better were already viewing the press's role in entirely the wrong way.

On Radio 4's Today programme, Guardian editor Alan Rusbridger was asked by John Humphrys whether he now felt "vindicated" in having published the story. Rusbridger was clearly baffled. It had, he said, nothing to do with vindication. The paper had no prior agenda. It had merely placed important facts in the public domain.

A day or so later I was asked on an Irish RTE radio show whether it had been a "triumph" for the British press. Again, this was an inappropriate question, though I suspect there are many politicians who see it in similar terms.

The more serious question is how much the press influenced Mandelson and Blair's decision that he should go. By Tuesday morning it was clear that the press were against Mandelson. After the Guardian broke the story the Sun, the Mirror and the Mail all took strong anti-Mandelson editorial lines despite his efforts to get his message across first by appearing on Newsnight. The following day his strongly worded line was "I will not resign".

But by Wednesday morning any thought of a fightback was impossible. The Mail splashed with the headline Master of Deception. The Mirror had Peter Panic. For someone who has so concerned himself with the message it was obvious that the messages were all against him. The headlines yesterday, from the Sunday Times revelation that three more ministers were offered cash for homes, to the Mail on Sunday's front page story that Blair has ordered an inquiry into who leaked the story, showed the story's emphasis is still running the same way. There is very little evidence of anyone defending the master of spin.

Getting at the truth requires sometimes dubious methods. If the story itself is in the wider public interest, then that is fair enough

On Radio 4's Broadcasting House yesterday Blair, giving his first interview, suggested that the press were over-egging the story. His Sunday morning's reading will have brought more discomfort.

Perhaps one of the best analysts of this age-old conflict between the press and politicians is Mandelson himself. His younger years were marked by the inbuilt newspaper bias against the Labour party and, after Neil Kinnock's defeat in 1992, no one set about the task of wooing the press more successfully. He adopted an intelligent approach, meeting as many of the key decision-makers as possible. Befriending some, gaining the ear of the majority, and opening a dialogue with them all.

It was not so much a charm offensive as a subtle form of diplomacy. He had his views. He accepted that they had theirs. Often they would not agree. But Mandelson had opened a door: he could argue his case face to face with his party's traditional foes, to question their motives and put the other side of the argument. Such friendships even afforded him the chance to lose his temper on occasion. Deal in fact, he would urge them, not in prejudice. Be accurate.

I imagine the thin Mandelsonian smile that will greet this final sentence. You have to admit, Peter, the press did stick to the facts this time, didn't they?

Media Guardian

19 Vanessa Feltz is dumped from her ITV talk show after demanding a £2 million pay deal.

23 First hint of problems at Radio 4 as leaked audience figures show 10 per cent decline.

September

2 ITV announces that it is moving News at 10 to 6.30pm. Tony Blair and Chris Smith voice opposition.

6 BSkyB confirm a multi-million bid for Manchester United. Carlton says it is in talks with Arsenal.

18 Jonathan Holborow sacked as editor of the Mail on Sunday.

21 Roger Wright, a safe pair of hands, announced as new head of Radio 3. Roger Lewis is appointed managing director of Classic FM.

24 The Barclay Brothers say the European will close if buyer is not found by the end of the year.



Vanessa Feltz

27 Daily Mail overtakes the Mirror as Britain's second biggest-selling paper.

October

12 The nation breathes a sigh of relief as Noel Edmonds says that he is dropping Mr Blobby from his House Party. "Frankly, and I think I can say it now, I loathe him," he confesses.

15 Channel 4 and BSkyB nick cricket from under the noses of BBC. The price? £103 million. The following week the BBC loses the Oscars.

November

7 Kelvin MacKenzie finally closes deal for Talk Radio.

9 The Murdoch Tapes: hours of interviews for a Channel 4 documentary, are released. Of the Guardian he says: "I think it's a terrific paper. I just don't like it."

19 ITC agrees to move of News at Ten. Jenny Abramsky announced as the BBC's new director of radio.

December

3 Carol Vorderman agrees £4 million deal to abandon the letters for Countdown.



Carol Vorderman

4 Carlton inquiry backs Guardian investigation of The Connection. The report finds the programme guilty of 16 deceptions.

9 Channel 4 reveals new look 7pm News.

19 Carlton fined £2 million over The Connection.

21 Guardian reveals that the sado-media-manipulator Peter Mandelson received a £373,000 home loan from Paymaster General Geoffrey Robinson. Mandelson says he will not resign, despite huge media pressure for him to go.

29 Peter Mandelson resigns.

And a farewell to...

Chris Griffin-Beale — died May 25, aged 50. Chief press officer of Channel 4 since its launch in 1982.

Sir David English — died June 10, aged 67. Former editor of Daily Mail, Chairman of Associated Newspapers.

Roger Luard — died August 16, aged 49. Chief executive of Flextech, transformed it from small oil services company to major player in British sky TV.

Lord Rothermere — died September 1, aged 73. Chairman of Daily Mail and General Trust, proprietor of Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday and London Evening Standard.

Lord Grade — died December 20, aged 91. Television and film producer, impresario and TV pioneer.

Getting a result

On business

Mathew Horsman: 'The elephant in the living room is the BBC'

In the business world, no sector is more used to declaring winners and losers than the media. It is a common pastime not only in the City, where winning and losing makes the difference between profit and loss, but in the media land of London's Soho, Fitzrovia and Clerkenwell, where even junior media men and women will hazard a view about who is up and who is down.

It has to do, perhaps, with the high degree of personalisation that typifies the industry. One tends to talk about Michael Green rather than Carlton Communications, Gerry Robinson rather than Granada. It has to do as well with the extraordinary role played by ego: the negotiations held, the deals done. The retaliatory tactics employed do not always make pure business sense.

The coming year will be no different. Winners are already being declared, and the criteria are not wholly objective. Some claim the digital race between Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB and ONdigital is already won: how can ONdigital's 15 channels possibly compete against the Dirty Digger's 140? Others are equally convinced that ONdigital, the 50/50 joint venture between Carlton Communications and Granada, will beat Murdoch at his own game by offering dish-free, cable-free access to pay-TV.

The digital scene will be complicated by an unpredictable factor: the outcome of two crucial regulatory reviews currently under way. In the first, the Restrictive Practices Court is set to rule on whether the contract between BSkyB and the Premier League is anti-competitive. If the ruling goes against the deal, BSkyB (and other would-be broadcasters of top football) will find it necessary to negotiate with each team individually. There is every chance, in that case, that the rights to the Premier on pay-TV will be divvied up among more than one broadcaster.

The second regulatory issue is BSkyB's £623m bid for Manchester United. The deal is currently before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, and a decision is not expected until March 1999.

While a rejection of the bid would not hugely damage BSkyB, approval would be highly positive, as it would give Sky an important seat at the negotiating table the next time the Premier League rights are up for grabs. Confusingly, it is not yet clear when that will be. If the Restrictive Practices Court rules against the current contract, a new deal might have to be negotiated more or less straight away. Otherwise, BSkyB has the rights until 2001. A positive outcome at the MMC might also allow other media companies to follow in Sky's footsteps and buy football clubs.



Goal hungry ... BSkyB's multi-million pound bid for Manchester United is currently before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission

Another litmus test for winning and losing in 1999 will be the outcome of any further consolidation within ITV. The jockeying over a 20 per cent stake in Scottish Media Group held by pay-TV packager Flextech is instructive. Flextech has received a number of informal approaches in recent weeks. Given that a Broadcasting Bill will probably be tabled within two years, and that the current ownership rules are likely to be further liberalised, the field is wide open.

Developments next year could indicate the outcome of the biggest mainstream TV play of all: the emergence of a single ITV. Who of the current breed — Green, Robinson or United News & Media's Lord Hollick — has the staying power? ITV may be in gentle decline, but the majority of UK households will still be watching mainstream TV in five years' time.

Don't lose sight of the other terrestrial broadcasters. Channel 4 will be spending freely on programming, websites and new pay-TV channels to complement its Film Four. Channel 5 is content to consolidate its reasonably firm grip on more than five per cent of the commercial audience. The elephant in the living room is the BBC — nominally, of course, a "non-commercial" broadcaster. Tell that to John Birt and his staff. Aggressive scheduling against ITV, millions more invested in digital TV and the launch of new channels will make Auntie look more like a media baron than ever.

The coming year could see a far more activist international strategy evolve at the headquarters of leading UK media players, who appear to agree that further international diversification could be matched by some creative lateral moves at home. Carlton and Granada have already acted, through their joint investment in the ONdigital service. The most intriguing of these adjacent opportunities derives from the Government's auction of new-generation mobile licences.

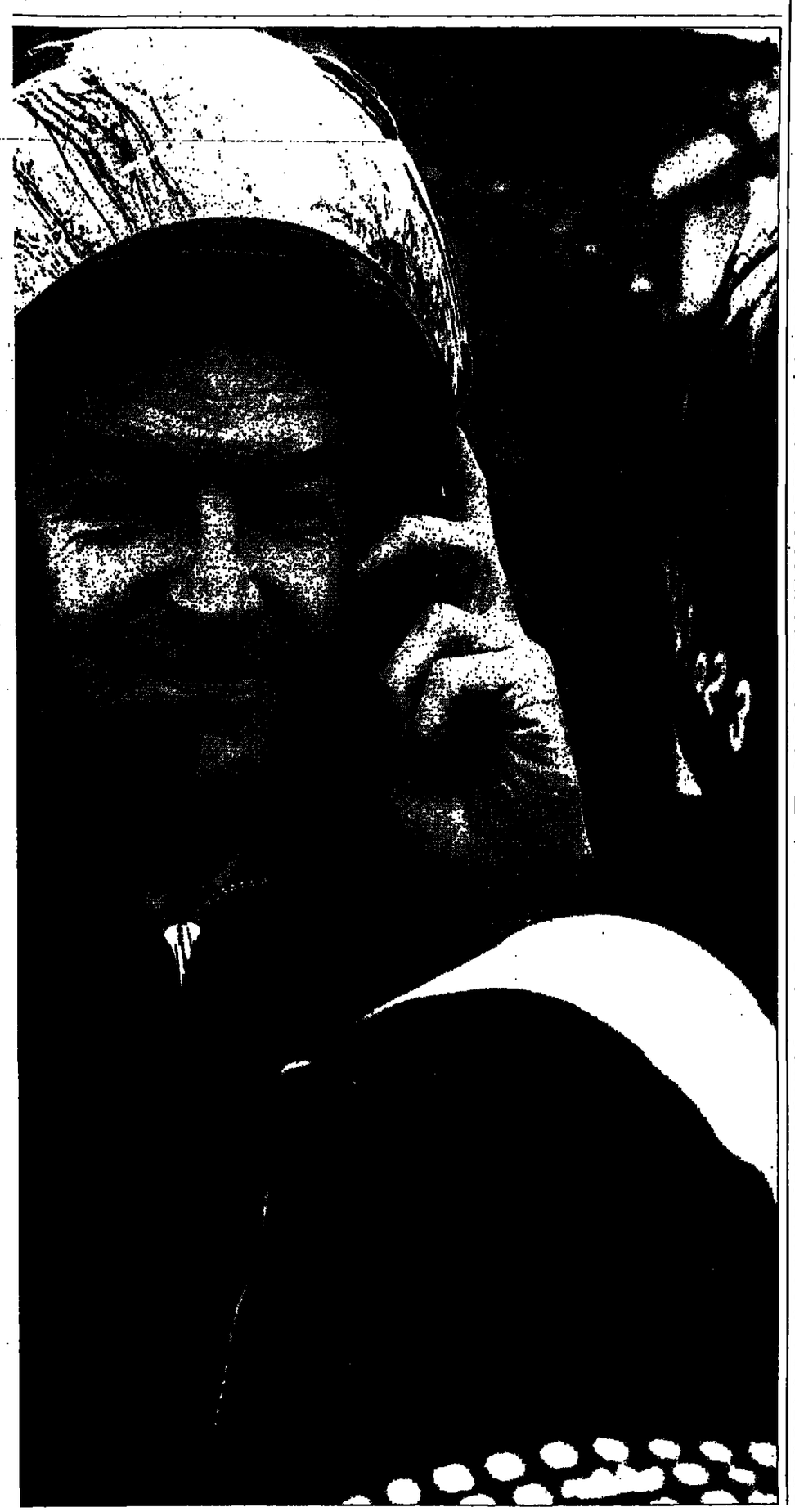
Called Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS), these will give mobile phone users reliable access to services normally associated with hi-tech fixed line networks. In a major departure from past policy, the Government is throwing at least part of this market open to new entrants, including, interestingly, content providers.

No doubt the old standby names in mobile telephones — Cellnet, Vodaphone, Orange and One2One — will be lining up to offer between £300m and £500m to secure one of four licences. But at meetings held in 1998 by the Radio Communications Agency, a number of media companies were represented, including Carlton, Reuters, Virgin and United News & Media.

The licences could lead to a wholesale revolution in the way a range of consumer services is delivered. This may have implications not only for telephone companies but also for the likes of BSkyB, Carlton and Granada, which all intend to offer at least a modicum of interactive services via their digital TV networks.

Whatever the outcome of competitive jockeying in 1999, there will be further consolidation in the media sector, with big players getting bigger and diversifying further. A simple dictum: don't bet against intelligent size

Mathew Horsman is a media analyst at the City firm of Henderson Crosthwaite



Geoff Dyer

on being clubbable



Do the hokey-cokey and you talk a lot

This year will be remembered as the year booze enjoyed a tidal resurgence. If cocaine became the drug of choice (more of which later) that was because of its fundamental compatibility with drinking. People couldn't take doing their heads in with E so they went back on the sauce. For mashed get smashed, as it were.

Future historians will discover that club life peaked in the Bar Italia at 11.46am on January 6 when a friend, impatient with the pumping soundtrack that had accompanied our every move around Soho, declared that "The whole world is a club." Things have changed since that epochal announcement. Pubs are now like clubs, but clubs are becoming like pubs. The result is that mongrel thing, the dance bar. That this outcome is inevitable makes it no less regrettable. I think it's a hideous combination, loud music and talking. I preferred the existential either/or, the way that, at about seven in the morning, after hours of music, an anchorite philosopher of my acquaintance suggested it was time that we adjourn to his cell "for conversation".

> All I care about now is not letting anyone else get a word in edgeways

One subject drowned out all others this Winter under the blizzard, the cocaine blizzard engulfing London. People got really high talking about cocaine. There you'd be, in the toilet, peeing, and someone would come and stand next to you and you could tell, just by looking at them, that they'd been having a conversation about cocaine. They'd be all bright-eyed and fired-up, and before you knew it you would be joining in, having a conversation about having a nose-full, about the ubiquity of cocaine conversation, making your own contribution to the discursive blizzard sweeping the country.

Cocaine is less a subject of conversation than a genre whose distinctive feature is the redundancy of the ear. When I first went to America I was struck by the way that the normal rules of conversation — I ask you a question, you ask me one back — did not apply. Instead, everyone just launched into an unquestioning monologue that left me speechless. Now, under the mitigating plea of cocaine, a similar style of conversational etiquette is established here. These days it's perfectly acceptable to rant on at someone else, to lay a pure, uncut ego-trip on them. If they've got any sense they won't take it lying down, they'll start jawing away buy-two-get-one-free right back at you. If love means never having to say you're sorry, cocaine — not the substance per se, but the mode of conversation of which it is the symbolic distillate — means never having to listen.

And what a liberation it is! I've spent years being bored stiff by people droning on at me; now I drone on at them first, before they get a chance to drone on at me. Having found so many people so boring for so long, I have become a crashing bore myself. No, listen, the thing about being a bore is that although it's terrible for everyone else it's fantastic being one yourself. I used to be mortified if someone said I was repeating something I'd already told them. Now I couldn't care less. All I care about is not letting anyone else get a word in edgeways.

That reminds me. The mulled wine scene was really kicking this Christmas. The theme of one such mullathon, Candy's, was how no one could face going out dancing any more, couldn't endure the nocturnal grind of getting off their heads. As Candy herself put it, somewhat grandly, "I simply couldn't take the gurning, darling." It was a splendid remark, all the more impressive for somehow making itself heard above the torrent of ego-drivel I was dishing out to anyone — no one — who would listen. It also highlighted a crucial difference between me and my druggy friends. I thought the idea of getting high was to better appreciate the excellence of the music; they thought it was to render inherently stupid music bearable. I never liked them anyway, all they did was interrupt.

That still leaves the question of what we — Candy and me and everyone — are going to do instead. "What shall we do tomorrow? What shall we ever do?" That kind of stuff. *NO, I'M* speaking. The thing about The Wasteland, right, is that Eliot foresaw both the way everyone would be so wired up talking about coke ("My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad.") and the era of chronic serotonin depletion allegedly beckoning. So I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to rush out into the street, as I am, with my hair down.

John Ryle is away

Women

The age of dissent

Michele Hanson



Having a ball

It is all eyeballs in our house. The dog's eyeball has festered for months and now my mother has finally had her cataract operation. With a local anaesthetic. Ow. She saw it coming. And her ward was plastered with Technicolor eyeball pictures.

It has been a difficult time for me because I'm not keen on eyeballs. The thought of anything happening to an eyeball makes me break out in a boiling sweat, except for my legs, which go icy and cold and shrink. In this condition, I must put my mother's eyedrops in four times a day. To help things along, I have a shout just before the drops. Aaaaargh!

Naturally my mother is hurt. "You don't mind the dog's eyeball," says she poignantly. "What's so terrible about mine?" But the dog's eyeball is plain brown and looks rather more robust. My mother's looks delicate and more like bare eyeball.

And it isn't only eyeballs. As the years pass by, I am growing more and more vapourish. Any glimpse of physical injury will do it. Any blood on telly, any suggestion of knives or razors, and I'm sweating and fainting again. Any births, deaths, wars, catastrophes or unfortunate animals and I'm blubbing away. To avoid mockery, I watch Pet Rescue alone in my bedroom where I can cry undisturbed.

"It's your menopause," Rosemary says strictly. "It's a transitional phase. You'll be better soon." But she's wrong. Phases don't last for 25 years.

I ring my friend Fielding for a change of topic, but bad luck. He has just been to the eye hospital to have two styes-turned-cysts removed. "It was Duke of Gloucester ward!" he shouts and describes the operation, which he remembers in detail, thanks to the local anaesthetic. His eyelids were stuck with daggers and knives, then he was sent home, bandaged and bleeding, in a taxi. The taxi driver had to lead him to his garden gate and open his front door for him, and his daughter won't come home because he looks such a fright. She is staying elsewhere.

Feeling rather hurt, Fielding sank on to the sofa and turned the telly on for some football, but his eyes were veiled in blood and bandages, and he couldn't watch it, which has wrecked his holidays.

At least my mother can now thread a needle without her glasses on. Happy New Year.

As the countdown to the millennium gathers pace, **Oliver Bennett** finds out why the future-watchers are watching women very closely indeed

Warrior or Madonna: which will you be?

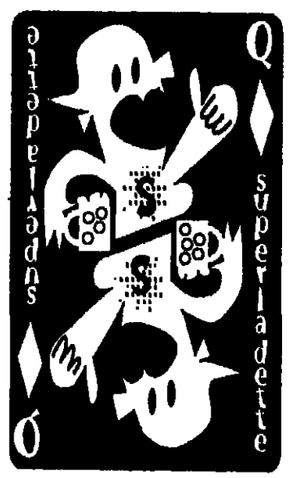
Ladettes, singletons, girl power — these are the buzz words guaranteed to get us all vigorously ringing out the old. But what are to be the female themes of 1999, the run-up year to what will surely be the most disappointing New Year's Eve in 1,000 years? Will men die out, to be replaced by turkey basters? Will the world be hit by a vengeful meteorite? Will terracotta be the new aubergine?

One thing is certain: the near future has never been so predicted. Futurology is firmly part of the science of marketing; it is capitalism's oracle. Its task is to predict consumer trends in order to make more money; its method is a mixture of social trends analysis and hype — what the marketing industry calls "blue-sky" talk (ludicrous "what-if" jargonising to you and me).

As the end of the century approaches, women are becoming increasingly important as consumers. As a result, the future-watchers are watching women very closely indeed. Based on her observations (she has, she says, "canvassed female opinion"), Rita Clifton of the branding and marketing company







Interbrand Newell & Sorrell believes that 1999 will be the era of powerful motherhood. She explains: "With two Spice Girls and an All Saint pregnant, there will be a baby boom. The millennium is an age-marker and I predict we'll see lots of babies being born."

A new concept indeed. This plethora of new mothers will be assertive madonnas rather than the quiet madonnas — a shift Clifton says is already manifest in parent and child magazines. Professional status will take a back seat. "Identity will not be built on work so much. Women will be able to emphasise different parts of their lives."

In all aspects of life, women will aim yet higher. "Expectations are greater than ever before," says Beth Barry, executive planning director for Europe for Ogilvy & Mather, the agency that four years ago anticipated the "women behaving badly" syndrome. Mustering all the hyperbolic brilliance of her industry, Barry says 1999 will be the year of the superladette. These women will not sit and wait for the phone to ring, or

Heroes and villains

Guardian Women acclaims (this page) ... and shames (opposite page)



Doreen Lawrence
Acclaimed for her unfaltering determination and for saying things about race relations in Britain that no one else has had the courage to say.

Mo Mowlam
Apart from brokering the small problem of peace in Northern Ireland, she managed to make headscarves look good.

Emma Thompson
There's more to the woman than a hockey stick, as proven when she said being chosen as a Government role model made her want to go and score cocaine.



George Michael
Must there be a reason? Oh, all right. For handling the LAPD with more panache than Hugh Grant.

EastEnders' Bianca
We'll miss you when you leave Albert Square. It won't be the same without screeches of "Rickeee" and your shopping trips "up west".



Margaret Beckett
For standing up to the Chancellor over exempting under-25s from the minimum wage. And for acting totally un-New Labour by hitching up a caravan for her hols.

Marilyn French
For surviving cancer and writing tremendously about it.

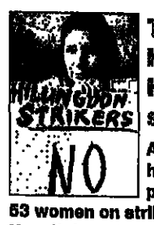
Filon Hague
Anyone who marries a man who thinks that wearing a baseball cap and drinking out of a coconut at the Notting Hill Carnival makes him cool deserves a medal.

Anna Ford
For speaking out about the sexism in television and not glossing over it with a smile.



Kate Moss
The supermodel's recent admission to rehab shows that, just like most of us, she is susceptible to a wee bit of "exhaustion".

Emma Noble
For being much brighter than is good for her career and finding something lust-worthy in fiancé James Major.



The Hillingdon Hospital strikers
After two and a half years on the picket line, the 53 women on strike at Hillingdon Hospital — who were sacked for refusing to sign new contracts which they said meant low pay and poor conditions — won their tribunal. The bad news is that they are still without jobs.

March

4 World in Action loses £1.3 million libel case against Marks & Spencer.

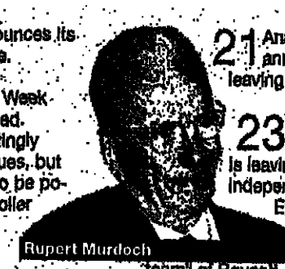
5 Daily Mail wins UKPG Newspaper of the Year Award. The Guardian wins three awards at the ceremony and is praised for its "courage and sheer excellence".

11 Tony O'Reilly wins control of the Independent from the Mirror. It is announced that Andrew Marr will return as "joint editor" with Boycott.

12 Guardian reveals that News At Ten is to be scrapped and replaced by bulletins at 6.30pm and 11pm.

15 Culture Secretary Chris Smith orders an inquiry into the BBC's scratchcard lottery programme after critics said it encouraged gambling.

16 Radio 4 announces its new schedule. Afternoon Shift, Kaleidoscope and Week Ending are scrapped. "We will be unstintingly Reithian in our values, but we are not going to be po-faced," says controller James Boyle.


Rupert Murdoch

April

1 Channel 4 ordered to screen on-air apology for its Against Nature series. "The programmes were inaccurate, anti-environmentalist propaganda," says Lord Melchett, chief executive of Greenpeace.

7 Rupert Murdoch attacks the BBC and Britain's cosy cultural establishment. "We are about change and progress, not about protectionism through legislation and cronyism," he says.

21 Anna Murdoch announces she is leaving Rupert.

23 Rosie Boycott announces she is leaving the Independent to edit the Express — a month after the "dream team" of Boycott and Marr were supposed to take the Independent to greater heights. The pairing "was a complete cock-up," says an independent journalist.

May

1 Andrew Marr quits the Independent. Simon Kelner, editor of the Mail on Sunday magazine, Night and Day, takes over. "We are trying to bring out a paper, they seem to be trying to sink the Titanic," says another happy Indy journalist.

4 Media frenzy over the hunt for child-killer Mary Bell as Gitta Sereny biography is published.

5 Guardian reveals that the Carlton documentary The Connection is a fake. ITC orders inquiry.

20 Two British nurses imprisoned in Saudi Arabia are pardoned and return to Britain. A frenzied bidding war leaves the Express and the Mirror with their exclusive stories. PCC launches inquiry.

June

22 Home Secretary Jack Straw announces strict guidelines on the power of judges to restrict reporting after newspapers raise concerns about the Human Rights Bill.


Jack Straw

page 12

July

28 Roger Alton appointed editor of the Observer.

August

10 John Mulholland is sacked as editor of the Sporting Life after an "indefinite" delay on the launch date. "Apparently I didn't have the necessary managerial skills demanded by the Mirror Group," he says. This comes as no surprise — they are in a league of their own when it comes to managerial skills."


Monica Lewinsky . . . media story of the year

On broadcasting

Our faces of 99

page 9Today programme meant that barely a blip went unreported. It still hasn't been fully adopted across BBC news.

All in all, 1998 probably can't end quickly enough for Tony Hall. Depending on which BBC faction you speak to, he's either played a blinder or effectively ruled himself out of the running to be the next director-general.

Odds on the next DG fluctuate daily. Channel 4 chief executive Michael Jackson is still the most frequently tipped; preceded by the words "as yet unproven".

Back in January, Channel 4 got a new chairman to go with its new chief executive. Sir Michael Bishop was replaced by Vanni Treves, who said he was "open-minded" on privatisation. It was an early comment, since qualified, but it nevertheless signified a greater commercialisation of the channel. Channel 5's head of marketing David Brook joined Jackson and oversaw the launch of a subscription film channel, Film Four.

Next year will see further forays into the pay-TV business from C4 and still fewer reasons for the Treasury not to sell off a multi-billion pound asset. After the ITC said the channel lacked innovation, Jackson and Brook set their sights on sport; stealing, along with BSkyB, the cricket from the BBC in a deal worth around £103 million.

Jackson has a number of New Year resolutions. He wants to develop more landmark programmes for the channel; he wants to cut down on the reliance on the Big Breakfast (who will replace Denise?); Countdown (Carol Vorderman worth £4 million shock) and Brookside (slowly clambering back up the ratings). His new director of programmes, Tim Gardam, has his work cut out.

Gardam left Channel 5 just as it developed problems with his most influential creation — the news. No one can doubt that the preponderance of news reviews, reforms and revamps were, to some extent, spawned by the influence of Kirsty Young and her brightly coloured set. Channel 4's new look owes much to the desk-perching theory of news delivery. Newsnight is preparing for a similar facelift. Amazingly, Channel 5 has failed to cash in, and by moving its main bulletin to 7pm lost a hatful of viewers. It will now move again in 1999, possibly to 10pm.

Channel 5 executives, all doing very nicely thank you very much, are in danger of a bizarre form of paradise syndrome — the share of the overall audience is okay, the programmes are getting better, what shall we do? Move the news.

Audience share is also the preoccupation of the two main channels, BBC1 and ITV. ITV managed to hit its 38 per cent peak-time share target — just, and not without raiding the Christmas schedule for goodies to boost the figures in early December. David Liddiment, the director of programmes who has no excuses left, must ensure the channel delivers on its promises for the post News at Ten schedule in 1999.

BBC1 is suffering from a slow erosion in the ratings game, and looks all the worse for the success of BBC2

Meanwhile BBC1 is suffering from a drip-drip loss, a slow erosion in the ratings game. It's top of the BBC priority list for next year, and looks all the worse for the strength and success of BBC2.

Jane Root, replacing Mark Thompson as the new controller of BBC2, will have to be generous to her old friend Peter Salmon, the controller of BBC1, and pass on some of BBC2's hits, while continuing to generate more. The channel has to genuinely work as a "nursery slope" rather than pay lip service to the idea.

BBC television nicked as many of its ideas and staff from radio as ever in 1998, from Matthew "sliding down the" Bannister, who became head of broadcasting production, onwards. Jenny Abramsky took over as director of radio; a Roger got the Radio 3 controller job although most of the national press seemed confused about which one. Classic FM and Radio 3 took the age-old rivalry right to the limit and fought over the two Rogers — Lewis and Wright — in a fraught weekend ending in Lewis at Classic and Wright at 3.

Radio's big story was in the BBC heartland of Radio 4 which triumphantly recorded its lowest ever audience figures at the end of a disastrous year for controller James Boyle. Kelvin MacKenzie spent seven months attempting — and succeeding — to buy Talk Radio in the face of a proposed management buy-out. He won, sacked half the staff, installed some old mates and will doubtless make a roaring success of his tabloid-radio station in 1999 with a little help from his former boss, Mr Murdoch.

The red devil himself had a busy year. Sky not only launched digital satellite, it tried to buy Manchester United, spawning a rash of "me too" statements from media companies trying not to look caught on the hop. Most are waiting until the Monopolies and Mergers Commission pronounces on Sky's £623.4 million shopping trip. NTL is also having a go at Newcastle United.

Aside from all that messy business about set-top boxes, Sky launched a diverting charm offensive on the British public. Elisabeth Murdoch pulled off a PR triumph at the Guardian Edinburgh International Television Festival with an unmissable performance at the Worldview lecture. She then ruined it all by posing for Tatler in evening wear, causing many to wonder who on earth advised that. We eagerly await a similar move from her ONdigital rival Stephen Grabiner early in the New Year.

A year of sackings, sales and Sky

January

11 BBC and ITV announce plans to axe "tpo boring" Party Political Broadcasts.

12 Richard Eyre and David Liddiment reveal their 100-day strategy for saving ITV. "This is not about managing decline, it is about re-energising the giant," Liddiment says.

16 As the battle for soap ratings hots up, Coronation Street unveils first transsexual character, Hayley Patterson tells fan cafe owner Bby Dropper before revealing that she is, in fact, a man.



Bridget Rowe

17 "She is not going to come up looking like Lily Savage and there will be no meat and two veg jokes," promises producer Brian Park.

20 Bridget Rowe quits the Press Complaints Commission after criticism over the handling of the Piers Merchant story. She resigns as Sunday Mirror editor the next day.

21 Alan Clark beats the London Evening Standard in the courts and forces the paper to amend its spoof diaries based on the Conservative MP's own writings. "It is the end of humour," laments Peter Bradshaw, who wrote the diaries. Rupert Allason loses libel action against Have I Got News For You which described him as a "conniving little shit" in his annual diary.

29 BBC announces Mastermind is to be resurrected on the radio. Peter Snow says he will not be using Magnus Magnusson's immortal line: "I've started so I'll finish."

30 Andrew Marr is sacked as editor of the Independent. Replaced by Rosie Boycott. "David Montgomery presentised and intimidated him into an impossible position," says Polly Toynbee, who resigns to join the Guardian.

February

5 Lord Irving causes storm of protest when he suggests pre-publication privacy laws should be strengthened.

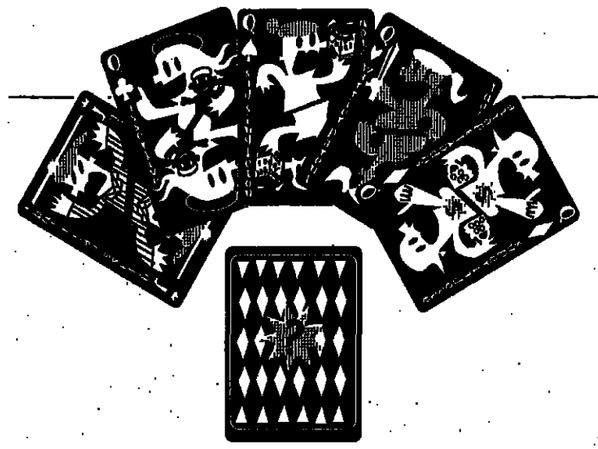
6 Michael Wearing quits as head of BBC drama series saying: "He (director-general John Birt) has made the lives of programme makers like me a misery."



15 Launch of Sunday Business. Editor Jeff Randall tells the intellectual capabilities of his staff "frighteningly unsocial."

25 Stuart Proffitt realises as editor-in-chief of Harper Collins over Chris Patten/Robert Murdoch book row. Simon Kelner follows. "They have tried to make me a scapegoat, but they have got the wrong man," Proffitt says.

26 BBC shocked by Colin Fassis's resignation. Fassis, a Yeadonby in Parliament, will move to long grave.







Warrior or Madonna:

Olivia Bonnett

Women

suffer silently in romantic victimhood. "They say: 'I've got to get my life sorted ... and my partner's'," Barry says. That's sounds like fun.

Faith Popcorn, meanwhile, the world's most famous futurologist, is currently writing a book about female futures called Eve Olution. "The Eve Olution trend is all about the power of the female market," says Mechele Flaum, president of Popcorn's marketing consultancy, BrainReserve. Traditionally, she says, manufacturers have been slow to market to women "male" products such as cars.

But now this is set to change. Furthermore, women not only start more new businesses than men (presently four times as frequently) but they are also more loyal as consumers. This mix, Flaum predicts, will lead to a new trend. Let's call it bespoke business and illustrate it with an example: Lucille's Car Care, Pittsburgh. At Lucille's, the eponymous mechanic finds out how much you need your car — for school runs or whatever — before fixing the schedule. "She is tying into an ethic that *people like*," *Flaum says.* "Hierarchical male manufacturers are going to have a hard time."

The trend towards female economic supremacy will be helped by wills and testaments. As women become the majority of heads of households, they'll also be more likely than men to receive family legacies.

But Utopia is not upon us quite yet. Single parenthood will continue to increase, although it will be less pathologised than of late. Many of these parents will become what Brain Reserve has dubbed warrior parents — mothers who mistrust schools and health facilities, and who question institution.

Meanwhile, out goes sisterhood (what, you missed it?) and in comes clanning. Flaum translates: "Clanning refers to female alliances that act through groups." That may explain why there will be, we are told, a sharp increase in female criminal behaviour in general and in girl gangs in particular.

One recent report in the US showed a small but disturbing trend towards women marshalling male accomplices to rape other women. But Flaum at BrainReserve sees this as marginal. "It's a search for powerfulness, but through imitating a male construct," she insists. "On the whole, I think we will see many more women finding ways of acquiring power through the female construct." Phew.

Meanwhile, at the Henley Centre for Forecasting, Sylvie Gagnot says: "The social norms for gender roles are not as strong any more. Now women have more choice." This also means the end of the sad singleton. "The notion that single women are desperate was widespread last year, *but the flipside is choice," Gagnot says.* So goodbye Bridget Jones, hello smiling singleton: "No longer do women feel they have to stay with men they are not happy with, or have pressure put on them to marry early."

The concomitant masculinity "crisis" may have been overpainted, Gagnot thinks. "It's the kind of confusion that happens at any time of change. Roles are changing and it's disturbing." Yet 1999's glass ceiling will remain unbroken. "Figures show that while women occupy higher ranks, management is still predominantly male. Female supremacy tends to be in smaller companies."

The consumer trend-spotters are being underwritten by millennial seers such as Austin Repath, the "millennium pilgrim", who lectures around the US on the 2000 effect. "Woman, or if I may, the feminine energy that is found in both men and women, is emerging in a rapid and unprecedented way at this moment in history," he says. "But it will not be a simple case of matriarchy replacing *patriarchy. Women will need to move* beyond their anger towards men. There are millennia of wrongs and pain that will not easily be exorcised."

Repath advocates a therapeutic ritual process, perhaps "not dissimilar to Bishop Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission". He adds that "the dark side of the feminine will need to be acknowledged; women will be asked to take responsibility for it and use it creatively."

So, some advice for 1999 and beyond: if you can't be assertive, be a warrior; launch a small and beautiful business; keep in with the clan; and acknowledge your dark side. And may the force be with you.

society

Every Wednesday in the
The Guardian EUROPE

On the press

Our faces of 99

page 9 preserve diversity. This mantra has infected debate about the industry since the beginning of the century when press barons, having founded great empires, were watched nervously by politicians, who feared their power.

It was accepted that if ownership was concentrated in too few hands, the proprietors would exercise undue control over the minds of their readers. Democracy would be threatened.

In a multi-media age this argument is considerably less persuasive. As long as cross-media ownership is regulated, there is no point in having so many papers fighting so unproductively with each other every day.

Competition can hardly be said to have improved editorial content in recent years. Indeed, it is largely bogus. Papers have come to resemble each other, concentrating on reactive features and lifestyle material rather than on breaking news and risking resources on investigations.

Papers clinging on for dear life, such as the Express and Independent titles, have been forced to cut editorial budgets, which undermines their journalistic commitment. These are, in effect, fake newspapers. That isn't to criticise their editors and staff: they are making the best of a poor situation. Nor are these papers without their merits. It is a tribute to all the staff that they do so well against the odds. But what is the point of the exercise? What are these papers for?

As one media chairman told me recently, the newspaper industry defies business logic because unprofitable titles are kept going without any realistic hope that they will ever make money. People own papers for kudos rather than profit.

Economics apart, the political objection to losing titles is surely irrelevant. What genuine political diversity exists among our morning papers anyway? Some are left-of-centre or liberal. Some favour the right. In the broadest terms this splits between a continuing Tory majority (in terms of sales) and a Labour minority. No paper supports the Liberal Democrats. Yet Tony Blair was elected by a landslide and the Lib-Dems picked up a host of seats.

Though newspapers remain key political and ideological tools, usually setting the daily agenda in spite of competing claims by TV and radio, they haven't been, for a long time, anything like as powerful as their detractors claim.

A literate, educated, thoughtful, geographically mobile population with access to opinions from an increasingly wide variety of sources cannot be manipulated by the press.

If that argument seemingly gives Murdoch and the fourth Lord Rothermere reason to smile, and all those who despise such paper tigers reasons to snarl, then imagine the corollary of many fewer national papers.

At present, press regulation is virtually non-existent. Owners argue that there is no need to impose a public service ethic. The market decides on matters of taste. If readers dislike intrusion into privacy, say, then they can buy a different title.

But a reduced choice on the newsstand would wipe away that argument. It would increase pressure on papers to perform more in the public interest. Self-regulation might not prove effective enough. The demand for laws to balance privacy and the right to know would prove overwhelming. In other words, we might get a better and more responsible press in the long run, despite having fewer papers and fewer owners.

I am not, of course, suggesting that newspapers are a dead concept. Sunday Business, relaunched in February by the Barclay brothers under the editorship of Jeff Randall, has successfully found an audience. Sport First has also done surprisingly well. This year, Mirror Group's delayed relaunch of Sporting Life is due, as is Scottish Media's new Sunday and Associated's Metro. But these are niche products. It's the days of the London-based nationals that are numbered. Which will be the first to go?

Who's in?

It's been 12 months in which reputations have been made. And lost. **Dan Glaister** reveals the media's highs and low

So it's official. Tony Blair's official spokesman received more mentions in the national press this year than any other media figure. Well alright, that's not the entire picture. A delicate spin here, a gentle glissade of interpretation there has been necessary to ensure that Alastair Campbell's name count is above that of his red-top rival Chris Evans.

The supremacy of the "pugnacious" (© All papers) public face of the prime minister comes in a survey of daily and Sunday broadsheets, together with the Daily Mirror, and the Daily Mail and Mail On Sunday. The rankings were compiled by setting a computer to search for the number of mentions in print of two categories of media-friendly names over the course of the year to December 11: the media figures from the good Lords Hollick and Rothermere to their editors; and the names who provide the grist for the media mill, the Spices, the politicians, the royals and Monica Lewinsky.

Lewinsky, unsurprisingly, records the fastest rise of the year, with 3,271 mentions in the UK press this year. Her achievement places her in fourth place in the list, behind Messrs Blair, Clinton and Hague. It also places her above the year's other wunderkind, Michael Owen. From a modest 476 mentions in 1997, the boy's own hero rose to 2,943 mentions this year.

And there is indisputable proof that Prince Charles has risen from the shadow of his ex-wife, with almost 300 more mentions than Diana for the last year. But in the year that the press, and the tabloids in particular, had promised to exercise self-restraint in their reporting of the lives of the royal heirs, mentions of Prince William and Prince Harry have stayed at the same level as in 1997. Prince William's name appeared 673 times in the national press, against 779 mentions last year. For Prince Harry the totals were 510 for this year, 532 for 1997.

Other notable increases year-on-year were produced by George Michael, up from 433 to 587 mentions, for reasons other than his best-selling greatest hits compilation, and Ally McBeal. The eponymous sitcom heroine was dignified with just one mention in 1997, while 1998 saw the name in the press 253 times.

In the real world of the media, Campbell grabs the top position only by virtue of combining the number of mentions for "Alastair Campbell" with those for "The Prime Minister's Official Spokesman". The two, apparently, are one. And Mike McCurry, until recently President Clinton's official spokesman, is at number nine on the list.

But a shadow still looms over Fleet Street: Robert Maxwell continues to dominate among proprietors. His 512 mentions for the year keep him above former rival Rupert Murdoch, who records just 304. The fastest rising media star is Rosie Boycott, who leapt from a standing start of 68 mentions last year (she was at the Indy at the time), to a tabloid stunna of 278 mentions (she is now at the Express).

Boycott is the only woman on the media list, while tabloid rival Piers Morgan creeps in at the foot of the list. Fleet Street's second-fastest rising star was the man with the most to gain, David Yelland, who merited just 17 mentions last year — possibly his byline count — but has leapt to 170 mentions this year.

But what of the hellraisers, the meedjah types who will do almost anything to keep their names in print? Andrew Neil, sad to report, is in decline, meriting 236 mentions against 246 in 1997. James Brown, former Mr Loaded, now master GQ ... was disqualified on suspicion of trying to rig the count. An early stratospherically high name-count was revealed to be fraudulent once the term "Godfather of Soul" was excluded from the search.

Fleet Street's favourites

Number of mentions in all national newspapers exc. Express and Sun

MEDIA		ROYALS, POLITICIANS, CELEBS	
1 Alastair Campbell/PM's spokesman	1997 736 /1998 1519	1 Tony Blair	1997 17834 /1998 17306
2 Chris Evans	1997 1204 /1998 1282	2 Bill Clinton	1997 2606 /1998 5928
3 John Birt	548/531	3 William Hague	2952/4094
4 Robert Maxwell	440/512	4 Monica Lewinsky	0/3271
5 Kelvin MacKenzie	112/383	5 Michael Owen	476/2943
6 Rupert Murdoch	360/304	6 Spice Girls	3697/2570
7 David Montgomery	178/292	7 Prince Charles	2567/2314
8 Mike McCurry	122/262	8 Princess Diana	2910/2060
9 Rosie Boycott	68/278	9 Richard Branson	1624/1797
10 Piers Morgan	130/255	10 Mohamed Al Fayed	1500/587

January 1 - December 31 1997 figures first, followed by January 1 - December 11 1998



Geoff Boycott
Shamed for taking misogyny to new heights after being found guilty of assaulting his former girlfriend.

Kate Winslet
For being so horribly bland.

Linda Tripp
For breaking a sacred rule: never set up a tape recorder, get your friend to spill the beans about who she's shagging, then tell the world.



Madeleine Albright
For showing her solidarity with Sudanese women by dropping a bomb on them and her war-mongering against "9'dam".

Ally McBeal
Being a lawyer does not make up for being a complete drip.

Melanie Phillips
Her rants in the Sunday Times have brought the reactionary out of the closet. A recent column was entitled Who Will Speak Out For The Battered Men? Mmm. Guess.

Margaret Thatcher
Like a monster in a horror movie, she crawled back to defend General Pinochet and suggest that single mothers should be put in religious institutions.



Lara Croft
Well, we can't hate a woman who doesn't exist. But Jeremy Smith, owner of the software company that created the game, is reported to have made a £1m bonus last year alone. How big will her tits have to be to double it?

Baroness Jay
For not being a feminist. Privilege has clearly gone to her head.

The Prodigy
For Smack My Bitch Up.



Mick Jagger
For saying that he didn't want his daughter to model and then sleeping with a model whose baby will be younger than his grandchild.

Gianfranco Ferre
Revenge for his objectifying designs for women would entail strapping him in a transparent frock and then watching him try to do the weekly shop.

Rodney Ledward
Because the self-styled "fastest gynaecologist in the south-east" managed to mutilate hundreds of women in his haste.



Brigitte Bardot
How can anyone love a dog but incite hatred against people by supporting the National Front?

Story Hermann Arndt, the Mossad agent who tracked down and kidnapped Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann, today lives in his own rural hideaway in deepest Devon. **Sean Brickell** tracked him down

Secret history







The history men . . . Hermann Arndt (above) does little to draw attention to his former life as the Mossad agent Zvi Aharoni (below right) who helped bring Adolf Eichmann (left), the notorious SS Lieutenant Colonel, from his hideaway in Argentina to justice

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: TIM CUFF

You don't find Hermann Arndt's house by accident. I twice missed the discreet turning that looks as if it doesn't lead anywhere. And when I finally drove along the tree-lined driveway up to his home in the Devon village of Woodbury, I could no longer hear the noise of the schoolchildren playing on their sports field, which backs on to his house, or any other sounds of nearby life. This is a private and silent place. But that is how this former international spy likes it to be: quiet, discreet and hidden from prying eyes.

For the few people who do come into contact with the bespectacled, 77-year-old Arndt, he portrays a picture of an elderly man living in rural tranquillity. He is small, wiry and fit, albeit slightly stooped, with messy, dark grey hair. But behind this now well-established veneer lies a dangerous and secret past.

The only clues to this are his cautious smile and piercing eyes. They show no emotion, yet make one feel as if he has seen right through you. But this is only natural for a man who was once an agent for Israel's secret foreign intelligence service, Mossad. He was also the chief interrogator for the country's internal intelligence service, Shin Bet.

Arndt's claim to fame, if that is an appropriate phrase for a man who eschews attention, is that he was the man responsible for pulling off one of the great coups of post-war espionage. Working under the alias Zvi Aharoni, the German-born Jew tracked down and kidnapped the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann from his hideaway in Argentina. During the Second World War, the Lieutenant Colonel in the notorious SS was responsible for the Gestapo's transportation of Jews to the gas chambers of the concentration camps.

For Arndt, it was a risky undercover assignment. Although his voice is weaker now, his German accent is still strong as he recalled: "First, I was an Israeli diplomat. I had a diplomatic passport because it's not a crime to look for somebody or to photograph somebody.

"But, later, I came with a German business passport because it's a big crime, especially in South America, to kidnap somebody and to bring them to Israel. The operation was therefore pretty dangerous."

Arndt spent several weeks in the early part of 1960 hidden under a tarpaulin in an old truck from where he watched and photographed Eichmann and his family at their tiny home on farmland outside Buenos Aires. Equipped with only an old photograph of Eichmann in his SS uniform when a young man, he had to be able to confirm that the person he was watching really was Adolf Eichmann.

The Eichmanns lived in poverty, without heating or water, in a concrete hut no more than 20 feet by 15 feet. Arndt showed me pictures taken of the family at close quarters without their knowledge. Posing as a local, Arndt went to talk to the Eichmanns while secretly filming them using a special camera hidden in a briefcase. The pictures confirmed that the bald, square-jawed man with spectacles was the Nazi war criminal Israel was so keen to bring to justice.

Shortly afterwards, a special operations team was flown out from Israel to help Arndt kidnap the man who organised and oversaw the killing of three-quarters of the Jews in Hungary.

After meticulous planning, on the evening of May 11 1960, the Israeli agents bundled their quarry into a van and drove off to their hideaway. Arndt was the driver and was also to be Eichmann's interrogator. He told his captive: "Don't object. Don't defend yourself. There's no need. But, if you do anything wrong, you will be shot."

"We didn't even have a gun with us. But, he said nothing. He was quiet. So, I shout at him again: 'Do you hear me? Can you listen?' No word. I shouted: 'Which language do you speak? Hable español? Sprechen Sie Deutch?' Nothing.

Arndt pulled off one of the great coups of post-war espionage

"I thought he was unconscious — maybe he had suffered a heart attack. God knows what. Then, all of a sudden, he says in perfect German: 'Ich habe mich schön mein Schicksal ergeben.' It means: 'I am resigned to my fate.' And this was his attitude.

"Later, I found out that he was waiting for us. He had lived for 10 years in a certain tension. Now it happened. Finished."

Arndt showed me more pictures on the desk in his conservatory. Even though some have been damaged over time, they show Eichmann dressed as a steward from El Al — Israel's national airline — with a passenger blindfold covering his eyes.

This was done by the abduction team so Eichmann didn't recognise them. They had all posed as El Al stewards to get themselves and their captive out of the country and back to Israel. Eichmann was later tried in Israel and executed in 1962 for crimes against humanity.

A few years ago, Arndt met one of Eichmann's sons, Ricardo, who at the time of the Mossad operation was a little boy. "He was a very nice man — a professor of archaeology. But I told him it was difficult meeting him as I had been responsible for his father's death. But he was very understanding and we shook hands and got on very well," he remembers.

Tracking down and kidnapping Eichmann was the highlight of an espionage career that started during the Second World War when he worked for British military intelligence. It is all a stark contrast to the bucolic life he now leads, working for charity and caring for stray animals.

I went with Arndt to his local Oxfam store for whom he makes deliveries to the old and infirm. He shared a joke with Debbie Wilson, the shop's manager, before disappearing as quietly and quickly as he had arrived. He is something of a mystery for the women who work in the store, whose cosy rural lives contrast sharply with their gentle helper. Although Debbie had a rough idea of who he was, she was visibly shocked when I enlightened her.

"You would not imagine that Hermann has had the past that he has had. He comes in here just so quiet, does a collection for us when we ask him, says 'Good morning' and 'How are you' and goes off again. I didn't dream that he'd had such a background," she said.

'Some people are still very angry with me. People I put behind bars'

Back at Arndt's home, he showed me how he likes to pass the time. He paints watercolours in a dark, ramshackle shed at one end of a large garden which is surrounded by high trees, for Arndt and his wife, Valerie, are private people. He has also adopted two abandoned rescue dogs, as well as a neighbour's, who follow him lovingly while he feeds the chickens at the far end of the garden. Arndt insists he doesn't hanker after his adventurous past.

"I don't miss the action any more," he said reflectively.

"So what do you most enjoy about your life now?"

"To be alive!" he chuckles. "To help animals. We have about 10 squirrels in the garden who are a pest, but I feed them. I can't help it."

Arndt may have come out from the shadows of his secret world, but he admits there are still risks.

"Some people are still very angry with me — people I put behind bars for being bad and evil, nasty people. If they know where I was I sometimes think they will want to kill me."

When I inquired if he was afraid of this he replied wistfully: "No. Not now. I have lived a good and interesting life and if I was to go now I would have done everything I possibly could. Death happens in the end. But, still, I don't want to go just yet."

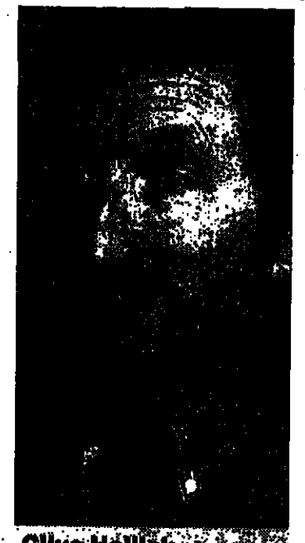
I asked him whether it was all worth it. "You must ask somebody else," he replied neutrally. The habits of old spies, it seems, die hard.

● Peter Mandelson: why that fatal scoop was a fair cop by the press 13 ●

MediaGuardian



Jane Root
Title: Controller BBC2.
Challenger as the new girl on the block, to take the channel on to new heights after the triumphs of the Mark Thompson era.
Chance of success: High.



Clive Hollick
Title: Chief executive United News and Media.
Challenger to sort out the Express and the Daily Star.
Chance of success: Even. There are an awful lot of pressures on



Katie Derham
Title: ITN's media correspondent.
Challenger to move up the pecking order in her challenging career.
Chance of success: Good, she is the best presenter in London



Greg Dyke
Title: Chairman and chief executive of Pearson Television.
Challenger to become director general of the BBC.
Chance of success: High, he is one of the leading candidates



Mark Booth
Title: Chief executive of BSkyB.
Challenger The takeover of Manchester Utd.
Chance of success: Even. Government is nervous about Murdoch.

Our faces of '99

On the press

Roy Greenslade: 'There is now a panic about the future of papers'

It was a bloody year in Fleet Street. During the 12 months, eight editors were axed, though most prefer to use the modern euphemism of resignation.

The sackings began in January with Bridget Rowe of the Sunday Mirror. By the end of the month Andrew Marr had gone from the Independent to be replaced by Rosie Boycott. In April, Richard Addis was ousted from the Express, again in Boycott's favour. Two months later Stuart Higgins's five-year reign at the Sun came to an end and Will Hutton relinquished the Observer's chair. In September Jonathan Holborow was fired after six years at the Mail on Sunday and a couple of weeks later Phil Walker felt unable to continue at the Daily Star. Along the way, after a period of compassionate leave, Brendon Parsons lost the editorship of the Sunday Mirror.

Given the fact that 1997 was bloodless, it could have been a coincidence. I think not. With a couple of exceptions, such as Holborow, it indicates the growing sense of concern, if not panic, among owners about the immediate future of their papers.

There is no more important matter as we move into 1999, so I will overlook the roll-call of last year's events in favour of an assessment of the industry's underlying problems.

Nowhere is the plight more obvious than at Clive Hollick's Express group, a poisoned chalice for any owner and any editor at any time, but infinitely more venomous in recent years after three decades of continuous decline. While the two Express titles are in a perilous state, the Daily Star is close to meltdown.

The received wisdom among my friends in the business is that Hollick doesn't know what he is doing and that his Express editor, Boycott, has insufficient grounding in mainstream journalism to effect the necessary surgery without killing the patient.

I am sympathetic to this view. But only up to a point, Lord Hollick. I can see what you're at, and your experiment does have its merits. I fear, however, that it will all come to grief. At the right moment, given the right owner and the right editor who shared a similar vision, the Express could have been revitalised, just as the Daily Mail was, under two men who died last year, the third Lord Rothermere and Sir David English.

Now, I'm afraid, it's just too late. Not only because there aren't enough sales left to play with, but due to the overall circulation decline and the huge change in the market place. In truth — and it pains me to say it — there is no longer any point in carrying on with the three Express titles.

Though Rupert Murdoch probably never did actually say that only three national daily papers would eventually survive, he had a point. There are now too many titles chasing too few buyers, and there will be fewer still as the years move on.

I recognise this is heresy. It has long been assumed that we must defend every paper, even beyond its natural life, in order to page 10 ▸

On broadcasting

Janine Gibson: 'These were hard battles in a year from hell for BBC News'

Surely the biggest question in broadcasting in 1998 was "will ITV move News at Ten"? And the biggest question of 1999 will be "so, what will happen when it does"? For the first eight months of the year, it was all about whether ITV's Richard Eyre and David Liddiment could successfully threaten, cajole or bribe their way to a united position across the troublesome network.

Suddenly in September it all came together. Proposals were made, the Independent Television Commission consulted, the entire country said no and permission was given. A headline writers' dream, it was And Finally for News at Ten (Bong!). What on earth will we talk about next year?

News is still big news in television. 1998 also saw the publication of the BBC's news programme strategy review. Another mammoth undertaking, this one was 18 months in the making. Tony Hall, chief executive of BBC News, announced that the Six O'Clock News would be more accessible and the Nine more foreign; that Jill Dando would be concentrating on other career options, and Huw Edwards is the man to watch at 6pm. These were hard-fought battles in the year from hell for the directorate.

Moving the world's largest news organisation into White City proved as doomed an effort as everyone suspected and no review of the year could be complete without a tribute to the BBC's digital ENPS news system. Tears, reorganisations, apologies, strikes, programmes falling off air and a threat to Radio 4's revered page 11 ▸